

Address by Mayor Ross C. “Rocky” Anderson

**October 27, 2007
City & County Building
Salt Lake City, Utah**

Today, as we come together once again in this great city, we raise our voices in unison to say to President Bush, to Vice President Cheney, to other members of the Bush Administration (past and present), to a majority of Congress, including Utah’s entire congressional delegation, and to much of the mainstream media: “*You* have failed us miserably and we won’t take it any more.”

“While we had every reason to expect far more of you, you have been pompous, greedy, cruel, and incompetent as you have led this great nation to a moral, military, and national security abyss.”

“You have breached trust with the American people in the most egregious ways. You have utterly failed in the performance of your jobs. You have undermined our Constitution, permitted the violation of the most fundamental treaty obligations, and betrayed the rule of law.”

“You have engaged in, or permitted, heinous human rights abuses of the sort never before countenanced in our nation’s history as a matter of official policy. You have sent American men and women to kill and be killed on the basis of lies, on the basis of shifting justifications, without competent leadership, and without even a coherent plan for this monumental blunder.”

“We are here to tell you: We won’t take it any more!”

“You have acted in direct contravention of values that we, as Americans who love our country, hold dear. You have deceived us in the most cynical, outrageous ways. You have undermined, or allowed the undermining of, our constitutional system of checks and balances among the three presumed co-equal branches of government. You have helped lead our nation to the brink of fascism, of a dictatorship contemptuous of our nation’s treaty obligations, federal statutory law, our Constitution, and the rule of law.”

“Because of you, and because of your jingoistic false ‘patriotism,’ our world is far more dangerous, our nation is far more despised, and the threat of terrorism is far greater than ever before.

It has been absolutely astounding how you have committed the most horrendous acts, causing such needless tragedy in the lives of millions of people, yet you wear your so-called religion on your sleeves, asserting your God-is-on-my-side nonsense – when what you have done flies in the face of any religious or humanitarian tradition. Your hypocrisy is mind-boggling – and disgraceful. What part of “Thou shalt not kill” do you not understand? What part of the “Golden rule” do you not understand? What part of “be honest,” “be responsible,” and “be accountable” don’t you understand? What part of “Blessed are the peacekeepers” do you not understand?

Because of you, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, many thousands of people have suffered horrendous lifetime injuries, and millions have been run off from their homes. For the sake of our nation, for the sake of our children, and for the sake of our brothers and sisters around the world, *we* are morally compelled to say, as loudly as we can, ‘We won’t take it any more!’ ”

“As United States agents kidnap, disappear, and torture human beings around the world, you justify, you deceive, and you cover up. We find what you have done to men, women and children, and to the good name and reputation of the United States, so appalling, so unconscionable, and so outrageous as to compel us to call upon you to step aside and allow other men and women who are competent, true to our nation’s values, and with high moral principles to stand in your places – for the good of our nation, for the good of our children, and for the good of our world.”

In the case of the President and Vice President, this means impeachment and removal from office, without any further delay from a complacent, complicit Congress, the Democratic majority of which cares more about political gain in 2008 than it does about the vindication of our Constitution, the rule of law, and democratic accountability.

It means the election of people as President and Vice President who, unlike most of the presidential candidates from both major parties, have *not* aided and abetted in the perpetration of the illegal, tragic, devastating invasion and occupation of Iraq. And it means the election of people as President and Vice President who will commit to return our nation to the moral and strategic imperative of refraining from torturing human beings.

In the case of the majority of Congress, it means electing people who are diligent enough to learn the facts, including reading available National Intelligence Estimates, before voting to go to war. It means electing to Congress men and women who will jealously guard Congress’s sole prerogative to declare war. It means electing to Congress men and women who will not submit like vapid lap dogs to presidential requests for blank checks to engage in so-called preemptive wars, for legislation permitting warrantless wiretapping of communications involving US citizens, and for

dangerous, irresponsible, saber-rattling legislation like the recent Kyl-Lieberman amendment.

We must avoid the trap of focusing the blame solely upon President Bush and Vice-President Cheney. This is not just about a few people who have wronged our country – and the world. They were enabled by members of both parties in Congress, they were enabled by the pathetic mainstream news media, and, ultimately, they have been enabled by the American people – 40% of whom are so ill-informed they still think Iraq was behind the 9/11 attacks – a people who know and care more about baseball statistics and which drunken starlets are wearing underwear than they know and care about the atrocities being committed every single day in our name by a government for which *we* need to take responsibility.

As loyal Americans, without regard to political partisanship -- as veterans, as teachers, as religious leaders, as working men and women, as students, as professionals, as businesspeople, as public servants, as retirees, as people of all ages, races, ethnic origins, sexual orientations, and faiths -- we are here to say to the Bush administration, to the majority of Congress, and to the mainstream media: “*You* have violated *your* solemn responsibilities. *You* have undermined our democracy, spat upon our Constitution, and engaged in outrageous, despicable acts. *You* have brought our nation to a point of immorality, inhumanity, and illegality of immense, tragic, unprecedented proportions.”

“But *we* will live up to *our* responsibilities as citizens, as brothers and sisters of those who have suffered as a result of the imperial bullying of the United States government, and as moral actors who must take a stand: And we will, and must, mean it when we say ‘We won’t take it any more.’”

If we want principled, courageous elected officials, *we* need to be principled, courageous, and tenacious *ourselves*. History has demonstrated that our elected officials are *not* the leaders – the leadership has to come from *us*. If *we* don't insist, if *we* don't *persist*, then *we* are not living up to our responsibilities as citizens in a democracy – and *our* responsibilities as moral human beings. If we remain silent, we signal to Congress and the Bush administration – and to candidates running for office – and to the world – that we support the status quo.

Silence is complicity. Only by standing up for what's right and never letting down can we say we are doing our part.

Our government, on the basis of a campaign we now know was entirely fraudulent, attacked and militarily occupied a nation that posed no danger to the United States. Our government, acting in our name, has caused immense, unjustified death and destruction.

It all started *five* years ago, yet where have we, the American people, been? At this point, *we* are responsible. We get together once in a while at demonstrations and complain about Bush and Cheney, about Congress, and about the pathetic news media. We point fingers and yell a lot. Then most people politely go away until another demonstration a few months later.

How many people can honestly say they have spent as much time learning about and opposing the outrages of the Bush administration as they have spent watching sports or mindless television programs during the past five years? Escapist, time-sapping sports and insipid entertainment have indeed become the opiate of the masses.

Why is this country so sound asleep? Why do we abide what is happening to our nation, to our Constitution, to the cause of peace and

international law and order? Why are we not doing all in our power to put an end to this madness?

We should be in the streets regularly and students should be raising hell on our campuses. We should be making it clear in every way possible that apologies or convoluted, disingenuous explanations just don't cut it when presidential candidates and so many others voted to authorize George Bush and his neo-con buddies to send American men and women to attack and occupy Iraq.

Let's awaken, and wake up the country by committing here and now to do all *each* of us can to take our nation back. Let them hear us across the country, as we ask others to join us: "We won't take it any more!"

I implore you: Draw a line. Figure out exactly where your own moral breaking point is. How much will *you* put up with before you say "No more" and *mean* it?

I have drawn my line as a matter of simple personal morality: I cannot, and will not, support *any* candidate who has voted to fund the atrocities in Iraq. I cannot, and will not, support *any* candidate who will not commit to remove all US troops, as soon as possible, from Iraq. I cannot, and will not, support *any* candidate who has supported legislation that takes us one step closer to attacking Iran. I cannot, and will not, support *any* candidate who has not fought to stop the kidnapping, disappearances, and torture being carried on in our name.

If we expect our nation's elected officials to take us seriously, let us send a powerful message they cannot misunderstand. Let them know we really do have our moral breaking point. Let them know we have drawn a bright line. Let them know they cannot take our support for granted – that,

regardless of their party and regardless of other political considerations, they will *not* have our support if they cannot provide, and have not provided, principled leadership.

The people of this nation may have been far too quiet for five years, but let us pledge that we won't let it go on one more day – that we will do all we can to put an end to the illegalities, the moral degradation, and the disintegration of our nation's reputation in the world.

Let us be unified in drawing the line – in declaring that we *do* have a moral breaking point. Let us insist, together, in supporting our troops and in gratitude for the freedoms for which our veterans gave so much, that we bring our troops home from Iraq, that we return our government to a constitutional democracy, and that we commit to honoring the fundamental principles of human rights.

In defense of our country, in defense of our Constitution, in defense of our shared values as Americans – and as moral human beings – we declare today that we will fight in every way possible to stop the insanity, stop the continued military occupation of Iraq, and stop the moral depravity reflected by the kidnapping, disappearing, and torture of people around the world.