

The  
Critical  
Choice



American Contradictions  
and  
A Strategy for World Peace

**MARK A. GOLDMAN**



The  
Critical Choice

by

Mark A. Goldman

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and  
A Strategy for World Peace*

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Critical Choice**  
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## Dedication



I dedicate this book to my father.

I don't remember how old I was — maybe seven or eight. We were coming out of a movie one Saturday afternoon and dad wanted to call home to tell my mom what time we'd be home for dinner. We stopped at a pay phone right outside the theatre. He put some coins in the phone, dialed the number, told mom how the movie went and when we'd be home. He hung up the phone and as we started to move away, we heard the change drop into the coin return. He reached down took the coins and put them back into the phone and started to walk away. This came as a surprise to me because I had seen other people actually pump the phone hook when they were done a call to try to get their money back.

“Hey Dad, why did you do that?” I asked.

He looked at me curiously, “Do what?”

“Put the money back in the phone?” my voice incredulous.

“What did you want me to do with it?” he asked.

“Keep it!”

“Well, it wasn't my money. I made my call. It belongs to the phone company now, not me.”

“But nobody would ever know,” I pleaded.

“I would,” he said. And off we went.

I'm dedicating this book to my dad because if more people were like him, I wouldn't have had to write a book like this. He was the best teacher I ever had. I didn't know it before, but I do now. And so, I see that if it weren't for him I might never have written any of these commentaries. After all, I always knew that some people would not be pleased with what I had to say. And who would ever know or care, if from the beginning, I had decided to just keep my mouth shut and not say anything at all?

## Special Acknowledgments



I had completed my book and was formatting it for printing. I wanted to compare the size of the typeface I was using to other books. I reached over for this little paperback that was sitting between two larger books on my desk. The title was *The Umbrella of U.S. Power* and the sub-title was *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Contradictions of U.S. Policy*. The author: Noam Chomsky. I opened the book. In the back is printed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights just like in my book. “Oh my God, I can’t believe it!” I screamed out loud. “This is almost the same as my sub-title. I was flabbergasted. “What am I doing—unconsciously plagiarizing Noam Chomsky?” I jumped out of my chair, upset. I didn’t remember when I had read his book or exactly what was in it. But I guess I liked it because there it was still on my desk.

At first, I thought about changing my sub-title, but then again... I just decided to leave it alone. Why? Because I had been brooding lately, wondering if anything I have written has made any difference at all. And then it occurred to me that maybe Noam Chomsky might have once had that same thought himself. His writings and lectures I know helped open my eyes to things I hadn’t even considered before. Now I’m sure I can’t help but look at some things the same way he does. But I don’t see that as plagiarism. I see that as having grown in understanding and perception. Surely Chomsky has understanding and perception big time. I know the fact is, that by ‘telling it like he sees it’ he’s been an inspiration to me and to a great many others, too. I hope this book is evidence of that.

The title of my book is *The Critical Choice*. I have a signed copy of a book in my library called *Critical Path*, by R. Buckminster Fuller. I promise you, when I thought of the title for my book, I was not consciously thinking of his book. But what I said about Noam goes double for Bucky. He has been my hero for a very long time and has influenced my thinking in many ways. My signed copy of *Critical Path*, which is now quite heavily worn, I might have kept in pristine condition, had it ever occurred to me before now that it might be worth a lot of money someday. I think Bucky would be pleased to know that I loved him and I loved what he had to say more than I love money. Dearest Bucky, the title of my book is in honor of you.

I don’t know if there’s one original thought in this book... maybe not. But here it is anyway. May it honor all those who had enough faith to trust that one day I would show up—just like many others have—and be able to understand and get value from what they had to say.



## Introduction and Context



**T**he relationship the government of the United States has to the people of the Middle East is essentially the same relationship that the government of United States had to Native Americans in the early part of our history. Which is to say, we want what they have. In the case of Native Americans it was their land that we wanted; in the case of Arabs, it is their oil. We are 'us'. They are 'them'. We do not really care what we need to do to get it and we don't really care what happens to 'them' in the process... as long as we do get it... and without it costing us what it's really worth.

We wanted the land; we took it. I suppose we thought it was too valuable to let it just sit there idle. Now what we want is oil. We think it is simply too valuable for us not to be in control of it. You have to understand that the government of the United States is not a human being. It has no soul, feels no guilt. Sometimes, the thinking goes, the rules have to be bent when the stakes are this high.

It is a myth and an illusion to think that 'We the People' are the government. We are not the government any more than the people who work for General Electric are GE. To see this you have to understand public relations and its role in creating myth. You have to be willing to see things as they are, not how you were told they were, or how you wish they were.

GE can live for two hundred years, although it is unlikely that any of its current employees will. Every one of its employees are expendable even though in the short run a talented group of them might create a set of long-term goals and strategies. Once those goals and strategies are adopted, management will seek to accomplish them. If a parcel of land is required, it will find a way to get the land. If it wants a plant here or there, it will do what it takes to get a plant here or there. And along the way, it will do what it can to minimize or 'externalize' its costs. It will not care if some people are displaced, if rivers are polluted, if some folks lose their jobs, their land, their

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culture, their heritage, or even their children... at least not unless a bad press will negatively impact long term profits. Even then, it will weigh the costs against the benefits. It's not a matter of right or wrong; it's a matter of meeting the target, the bottom line. If it cost less to pollute a river than what the potential fines and lawyers fees might be, then it's simply a straightforward business decision... sort of like "collateral damage" is in a war zone. The only real question is what are the benefits and what are the costs? If the potential benefits are attractive enough, the costs are simply going to have to be borne by those who might happen to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. It's nothing personal.

Do corporations have compassion; do governments have compassion? No. Although to protect their image it might be expedient for them, when necessary, to appear as if they do. Corporations and governments are institutions that do not exist in reality; they exist on paper. You can't show me a corporation and you can't show me a government. You can only show me a logo, or a building, or a web site, or a product, a document, an employee, a stockholder, a citizen, or a flag. Where do you put a stethoscope to hear a corporation's heart? You don't. Where do you put a stethoscope to hear a government's heart? It ain't got one.

The relationship that GE's management has to the outside world is the same kind of relationship that government officials have to the outside world. The competing forces are very much alike. This is not to say that the people who hold position in these places are in any way bad folks. They are probably no different from you, your family members, or your friends. It's just how the system works... You're a lawyer. Your corporate client asks you how to avoid responsibility for its gross negligence where people were injured. You know a technicality that will get them off the hook. You give the advice, file the documents, collect your fee. That's all.

In their private lives, the people who work in government or in corporate America are just like you and me—decent and caring. But when there are big decisions to be made and big trade-offs... they will always be confronted with the lesser of two evils.

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“If we move the plant to Sri Lanka the effective wage there is maybe fifty cents an hour. We can’t afford not to do it. If I don’t make the decision, we’ll be replaced by someone who will.”

“If we cut the budget for meat inspectors we can get our state’s top meat processor off our backs, get the endorsement we need, and free up some cash at the same time. I can’t worry about animal rights when jobs are at stake; I have the next election to think about.” And so it goes.

Now corporate America owns the airwaves and corporate America wants what it wants or at least it doesn’t want to lose what it’s got. And the government wants what it wants too, and what it wants it can get because it can deliver what the folks who own the airwaves want, or it can protect them from what they don’t want. Who will know? Nothing personal.

When you read my commentaries you need to understand what I am writing about: I am writing about *what* I see... not *why* I’m seeing it. But *why* am I seeing what I see? Because that’s how things work now, in the culture we live in.... and that’s also why these things are not being discussed in the popular media.

The United States is now the world’s one and only superpower. More importantly, it is the one and only emerging monopoly. You should understand, that when a monopoly matures, (i.e., after it has emasculated the competition), it goes on to emasculate its customers, its suppliers, and its employees, for the benefit of stockholders... but only up to a point — *the point at which stockholder wealth is as great as it can conceivably get... period.*

*When I was writing these commentaries I didn’t realize any of this. It only occurred to me later when I was trying to figure out how it happens that corporations or the government, in a country of decent people, can be so cruel and get away with it. Now I understand. Good people are capable of anything. All you need to do is get a glimpse inside a sweat shop in Sri Lanka or a slaughterhouse in the state of Washington and you will get an idea of what life could be like one day for your grandchildren. If you think it*

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*makes a difference whether you vote Republican or Democrat, you are living in a dream world. What you decide to do now is what I call **The Critical Choice**... And I don't think there's any more time left... most likely, it's now or never.*

— Mark A. Goldman

Crimes Unseen

<http://www.oriononline.org/pages/om/04-4om/Jones.html>

Human Misery and Suffering

<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/144/>

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*First they came for the Jews...  
and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.  
Then they came for the Communists...  
and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist.  
Then they came for the trade unionists...  
and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.  
Then they came for me...  
and there was no one left to speak out for me.*

— Pastor Martin Niemöller



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### Astounding Contradictions

June 28, 2004



**T**he contradictions are astounding actually. When I think about the people I know, the people I come in contact with on a regular basis — members of my family, friends, acquaintances, familiar faces that I see in my little community... like at the supermarket, for example — I am reassured that human beings are a wonderful species. I can't think of anyone I know whom I would prefer not to know. Spend five minutes with anyone in my life and you will experience having met an honest person who has a kind heart, loves his or her family, and tries to live a decent life.

But then I sit down to write about the thoughts and observations as they work their way into my consciousness and I am astounded by what confronts me. How is it possible in a country populated by people like these, that we as a nation can get so off track? It seems like such an amazing contradiction. And it is. Now my intention here is to share my experience as I understand it — that is, to tell the truth as I experience my experience moment by moment. Unfortunately, in our culture, this is not so easy to do, nor is it always welcome.

I am no different than most other Americans in that I experienced that somehow life changed on September 11, 2001. And what I have observed and experienced since then comes as an unexpected and sometimes crushing surprise... I will explain with these examples:

1. We were attacked on 9/11 in an act of retribution, which is to say, we were attacked because, as I have since learned, some people thought we deserved to be punished. I have, since that day, studied the facts and I have concluded that they were probably right. And given all the atrocities that the U.S. has now committed in Afghanistan and Iraq, we probably should expect more of the same. This is not to say that any of the three thousand people who died on 9/11 deserved to die. After all, those people were just like the people I know — my

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family, friends, and neighbors — but as a country, we have engaged in behaviors that are so unworthy that I can now understand why some people would want to make war on us.<sup>1</sup>

We have made and continue to make war on others and almost never pay a price for our treachery and infidelity. Most of our citizens are oblivious to what we do to others on the international stage. Should we conclude that our ignorance makes us innocent? I realize, you would have to consider that question case by case, but on the whole... I don't think so. Why? Because ignorance in America is mostly negligence. It's not my place to know or to judge what is going on in other people's lives. All I know is that I was able to learn more about what's going on when I decided to do some research on my own rather than just trust the mainstream media to keep me informed. Now I see that as a people, we do not care enough, nor are we responsible enough, to demand good information. So we often satisfy ourselves with propaganda, half-truths, or lies instead. And surprisingly, I now believe this is what most of America is spoon fed every night on the six o'clock news.

2. Those who attacked us on 9/11 believe that we regularly and deceptively misrepresent ourselves to the rest of the world as one thing when in fact we are something else. On being attacked, we demonstrated to the world that they are right. We responded to the attack without wisdom or honor. We declared war without understanding why we were attacked or what the consequence of our response might be on innocent bystanders. We quickly passed legislation that desecrated our Constitution and made a mockery of our values and system of government. Elected representatives willingly gave away some of our most sacred rights and freedoms without even reading the legislation they voted for. They became sheep when what they could have demonstrated was true courage and character. We struck out against those who perpetrated the crime without proper regard for international law and



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without reasonable care or compassion even for children.<sup>2</sup>

And so we ended up killing and maiming unnecessarily many more thousands of innocent men, women, and children on their soil than were killed or hurt on our own... and did so without so much as an apology. We became the very criminals that those who attacked us said *we* were; and in some real sense became what we said *they* were.<sup>3</sup> And the world looked on in amazement. We proved that if Afghanistan and/or Iraq ever ends up free, it will be because God loves justice — not because 'We the People' do. The injustice and stupidity in what we did is, to me, mind boggling. Yet many Americans still believe we did the right thing. Our insensitivity is an invitation to terrorists to hit us again, and I think they surely will try.

3. The person we call our President was never legally elected to office and his conduct since taking office can easily be described as treasonous. Rather than be impeached and put on trial for committing war crimes and other offenses,<sup>4</sup> the polls tell us that this candidate still has the support of most of the citizens who originally supported him.

Now we are facing a new Presidential election. And what now confronts every responsible citizen in this country we call the greatest democracy on Earth? It is an election system that guarantees that if every citizen honorably voted for the one candidate he or she would *most* like to see become President, the candidate that the majority of citizens would *least* like to see become President would actually get elected. In fact, one candidate, who has proven his patriotism and his love of democracy throughout a long career of public service is being vilified in the popular media and even by some people who agree with his policies. They call *him* a spoiler. They say *he's* selfish. Many of these people are even trying to prevent *him* from getting on the ballot. This we call the love of

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democracy. This is not democracy, this is just politics — the same consciousness that we've come to know as 'politics as usual.'

4. Most citizens probably don't realize this, but every elected official knows that the system doesn't have to work this way. Every elected official knows that a simple change in voting procedures (e.g., instant runoff voting <sup>5</sup>) could insure that every citizen could vote according to his or her true beliefs without having to worry that their vote would favor their least favorite candidate. But most elected officials don't want to change the system because it doesn't serve their own short-term selfish purposes. This is blatant disrespect for democracy, justice, and one's own posterity. Why do politicians in these United States of America have to be this unpatriotic and short-sighted?

The people we elect to office — people who supposedly are like us — are influenced now more by money than by courage or honor. It takes money to get elected or stay in office... but not honor so much. Democracy in America no longer works, and to call it a democracy is a bit of a farce. In government today, money rules... truth and justice do not. Not that different from the past, you say? Maybe not. But it is also not what it could be or should be in what we call the greatest democratic republic in the world. We seem not to want to learn from the past. But I guarantee you that we will... because that's how life works. What I am saying is understood by many. Many of our elected officials are frustrated by how things are, and yet they do not have the courage to say so in public. If you go on the internet and search for intelligent political commentary you can find it, but intelligent political commentary is not what the American people are offered in the popular media... so there is no commonly shared community experience available to all citizens that would allow us to consider what the world's best minds might bring

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us in our own best interest. Fortunately, on the periphery, the possibility for change does exist... after all, there is the internet, and here you are reading this... for what it's worth.

5. Our economy is based on corporate greed, which is unsustainable. Routinely, resources are not allocated intelligently even though theoreticians tell us that capitalism does it better than any other known system. Maybe capitalism could work, but we don't live under a purely capitalist system. We live in a corrupt system. Capitalism is not a system of government, it is an economic system, but in America, we now think of them as one and the same — a fatal flaw in our understanding. In fact, when you look at the world as a whole, you can see that our brand of capitalism is destroying the world as we know it. Mother Earth is being defiled on every continent as life support systems are collapsing. This, so that vast amounts of wealth can be owned by a relatively small number of human beings, while most of humanity lives in poverty. And this is not because the 'haves' are so smart and everyone else is so stupid. It is because we have programmed ourselves to celebrate and tolerate greed more than we celebrate wisdom, justice or love.

Oil is a prime example of how we mismanage wealth: We have already extracted from the earth approximately half of all the oil that ever existed on the planet and experts tell us that at the current rate of extraction, world oil reserves will last perhaps another 50 to 100 years. Precious black gold. When you consider how oil can be chemically manipulated to create thousands of miracle products and then consider that we use it mostly to burn as fuel in oversized automobiles, it becomes clear that we do not live under an economic system that is designed to sustain the human species, let alone sustain it under conditions of freedom and democracy. Almost industry by industry, it is now possible to observe that we are managing our resources as if our society was, in fact, insane.<sup>6</sup>

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6. From what I have observed of Islam, humanity will not find its answer in that religion. But then again, humanity will not find the answer in any religion. The most important document in my estimation on the planet today — words that could guide us towards a world that could work for every human being on the planet — is not the Bible, the Torah, or the Koran... it is the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. I personally think there is more God in that one document than in all the rest put together, which makes me wonder why it is being universally ignored and trampled upon. We are all such fools. This is my opinion. Did you think God would send us a roadmap two thousand years ago and then just sit back and see what happens? If that's what you think, then you don't really know an awful lot about God. If you would only read, study and hear commentary on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights every Friday, Saturday, or Sunday... and send your children to a school that would teach them to love what *it* says, the world would become a much better place than if you simply continue to do what you do now, even though what you do now you call the worship of God. God, I assure you, is not impressed.<sup>7</sup>
  
7. What good does it do for me to say such disparaging things, to challenge what some people think is sacred? What wisdom is there in that? I don't know for sure that it is wisdom. And I am not trying to say disparaging things. I am simply trying to tell the truth... hoping that telling the truth will lead to wisdom. Have I told the truth? Well certainly not the whole truth. But what I believe is this: that everything in life, and every human life, could improve little by little, in small increments or even in large increments, if each of us intended to live each moment with simply the courage to tell the truth as it independently comes to us, and then use the insight we get to slowly refine our behavior so that it becomes appropriate to where we want to go.

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What I have left out or what you disagree with might be enough to move you quickly to your next frame of experience. Close the book, off I go. But if you are looking for answers, I believe they are available to anyone who is willing to see them when they show up.

Learn to just be quiet and listen for a while to your own inner voice. Be quiet. Listen. Don't do anything. Just listen. Wait... just this once.

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- 2 <http://www.gpln.com/maybejusttears.htm>
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- 4 <http://www.gpln.com/openlettertocitizens.htm>
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- 7 <http://www.gpln.com/interview.htm>

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Reflections  
June 18, 2004



George W. Bush and Osama bin Laden are two individuals who share similar attributes: Both are religious zealots in the early stages of their spiritual development who were given a degree of power and influence that one would hope would be accompanied by a level of wisdom and intellectual maturity that neither man possesses.

Bin Laden attacked the United States on September 11, 2001 to punish us for the crimes he believes we committed:

1. for helping Israel disenfranchise the Palestinian people,
2. for U.S. complicity with his own family in corrupting Saudi Arabia, and
3. for the deaths of 600,000 Iraqi children who died as a result of the UN sanctions which the U.S. sponsored along with the U.S. bombing of essential water, sanitation and other life support services in Iraq.

In attacking the United States, bin Laden gave little thought to the thousands of individuals who might die in his act of retribution, considering them only to be ‘collateral damage’ at best, or at worst, identifying them as guilty by association... which is to say, that since they are Americans and since they elected and support their government, they are just as guilty as those in power. The thinking of one who would carry out such an attack probably goes something like this: “These folks are guilty of punishable crimes and in the name of justice and in the name of God (Allah) I will punish them. Once punished, they will reflect on what they have done, be sorry for the injustice they caused in the world, they will repent, and justice will be served.”

Of course, on being attacked, George W. Bush, so-called leader of the free world, characterized the attackers as fanatical zealots. Bush’s thinking seems to go along this track: “These people are backward barbarians who hate freedom, democracy, and justice. Surely I have

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been put here on this Earth and have been given this power for a purpose, which I see now is to show these people that their god is false and evil while ours is righteous and good. And while I am at it, it seems only proper to remove Saddam Hussein from power, for he is also an evil man. In addition, he controls oil that we need, and removing him will insure that we will always have access to this resource.” (Of course, I am giving Bush the benefit of the doubt when I suggest Bin Laden was actually solely responsible for 911 and that Bush’s thinking was this ideological.)

So how careful do you have to be if you view the land you are about to invade as being populated by an ignorant, uneducated, backward horde? Not very, evidently... which explains how a “hit ‘em hard” strategy can result in so many lives being destroyed in the process. After all, there will always be some collateral damage as the theory goes. Right? And this is how you get tens of thousands of collateral damage casualties without getting a guilty conscience at the same time. After all, collateral damage is not something you try for on purpose. It is accidental damage, so it can’t be considered murder even though the innocent victims end up just as dead and their families grieve just as deeply as if murder had been intended... and even though the death and destruction was all predictable to start with.

What are the common threads of the unenlightened, unexamined thinking here?

1. It is that 'the ends justify the means.'
2. It is that the lives of people one doesn't know and understand are not as precious to God as the lives of people one does know and understand, and
3. It is that "I am the one who God has chosen to do His work."

And so what you get is something like this:

- Bin Laden: “God is great. Now the U.S. will wake up, repent, and one day live up to its promise.”

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- Bush: “God is great. Now the people of the Middle East will one day live in a democracy.”

Of course both men could be right, or hopefully they will be in time.

Well... God indeed IS Great... and very patient, too. And so God continues to help us make lemonade out of our lemons, albeit not without having to witness a good deal of human suffering along the way. And God continues to teach us wisdom through experience, each at our own pace and in our own time. This too, not without a good deal of suffering.

What is left to say but... God please help us, and bless us all, every one... for surely each one of us is a participant... in that, as citizens, we each have a voice and a vote; each one of us will likely learn something from the experience; and some of us will learn our lessons accompanied by a good deal of suffering.



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It's Up To You

February 4, 2003



A few days ago I published and emailed out a piece that many folks may not have been able to read because I sent it out as an attachment. That piece is reproduced at my web site. The link to that piece, and most of my other writings, is provided below. Today the 911 Commission met and asked witnesses what might be done to alleviate or eliminate the increasing terrorist threat that we all now face. (It is on the radio even as I write this.) No one on the Commission and no witness so far responded with a degree of wisdom that I would have hoped for. I don't expect now that anyone else will either.

As for my own credentials, I have none other than whatever words I have assembled and put onto a page. There are many people, however, who do have highly respected credentials who are in alignment with my views and who are also not being heard. With respect to terrorism, my most recent piece touches on what I believe is the central issue, which if ignored, could be the downfall of these United States of America.

You are probably familiar with the theory that no one is farther away from anyone else on the planet by more than by six degrees of separation. That means we are all very close to making a difference. It also means that if you believe my views or anyone else's views are important but are not being heard by the people who need to hear them, your participation might be all that it takes to make the difference. I suggest you read what I wrote on the 13th and also read other pieces I wrote and follow the links provided. If you read what I have written and come to agree with my views, what you do after that could determine whether these United States will remain a free and open constitutional democracy or become something else.

It's up to you.

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### Bush's Perpetual War

June 13, 2004



**B**ush's illegal war in Iraq has now rendered international and Constitutional law essentially useless for settling political disputes. By refusing to subordinate itself to the United Nations or any rule of law in determining if, when, and how force might be used against any other nation, Bush renders international law impotent. Given this precedent, no legal system can now be trusted to adjudicate international disputes between any two parties. Once any party determines that direct agreement with an opponent is impossible, the use of terrorism will be on the table as an option.

When one sovereign nation decides to initiate force against another we usually call that war. War between nations is fast becoming obsolete. The strategic use of force by entities not considered nations, can be described as terrorism. Here I am referring to the use of force by any group or faction that seeks to leverage its power for political gain by inflicting on ordinary citizens great amounts of pain and suffering in order to precipitate political fallout in its favor at relatively low cost. It is usually able to do this in a manner that precludes those in power from using their own more advanced weaponry to defend itself.

Our competition with the Soviet Union involved the development of advanced weapons technology. Now that we no longer have a close competitor in this arena and now that the rule of law is no longer dependable, every nation will have to become very creative on its own if it wants to be able to defend itself. If we don't move quickly to reaffirm existing law, we will experience another kind of arms race and this one won't be pretty either.

In short, Bush's war on terrorism will now lead to more terrorism. If you once thought you were afraid of nuclear war, just you wait. It is a lot easier and cheaper for any terrorist network to do its work than it is for any democracy to stop it... without making things worse in the process, that is. Is this how we are going to squander our resources?

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Prior administrations have, when they thought it advantageous to do so, supported terrorists in other countries, usually with impunity. Bush didn't invent the illegal use of force. We never had to worry before about terrorism on our own soil. But now, by further undermining the rule of law, Bush has put every small nation and/or faction that is strategically important to the U.S. on notice that, for its own self-defense, it may have to learn how to use its limited resources to maximum effect through terrorism lest American Imperialism swallow them up whenever it decides to.

If the policies of this Bush administration are not repudiated; if we do not reaffirm a new commitment to established international and Constitutional law by enforcing the laws that are now on the books and punishing those who have betrayed them, then we are back to the law of the jungle, where we can expect our opponents to evolve their own unique and creative methods of defense and aggression in order to protect and/or carve out space for themselves. If terrorists can't target Americans on their own soil they can surely target them elsewhere.

This war with terrorism was totally unnecessary. The terrorism we are now fighting is nothing more than "blowback." This is the result of America behaving dishonorably and/or foolishly on the world stage (as we did in Iraq, for example, when the sanctions we sponsored resulted in the deaths of over 500,000 Iraqi children.) We have, in the past, selfishly and illegally sold out budding democracies, and/or betrayed the people of other lands, to benefit our own powerful corporate or national interests. We also pursued other shortsighted objectives, often at the expense of other people and sometimes even at the expense of our own.

On 9/11 some of those who learned to despise us for what we did, began fighting back. We had a free ride for a while, but now that ride is over. We never called what we did terrorism, but that's often what it was. We need to acknowledge our wrongdoings, promise reparations for the suffering we have caused, and recommit ourselves to the rule of law. That is the only way out of this. If we do not do this, I believe we are in for a long siege of suffering and war. And time is running out.

## The Critical Choice

If we are going to turn this around you will have to put your life on the line: not by picking up a gun or getting in the way of shrapnel, but by standing up alone in your community if need be, before your family, friends, colleagues and associates, and telling them what you know. Doing so could put you at risk of losing your job, your social standing, and maybe even the support of people you care about. But if you don't do this, your country and the people you care about are likely to suffer greatly because of your neglect and because of their own misinformation, shortsightedness, or apathy. If you wait for people in high places to stand up first to give you cover, it will be too late. You have to give them cover.

Bush and his father and their circle of friends have been among those who have helped betray the common people of other lands and our own. He obviously believes he is so powerful now that he can turn away all reprisals. If we don't act quickly, we're going to find out if he's right. If you think we are so militarily advanced, that our government can insure our freedom and safety forever in the face of every creative biological, chemical, or explosive threat to our resources or our people — then don't do anything, just stand there.

But I suggest to you that once terrorists inflict another set of casualties on American soil it's going to be too late. We could one day end up like Israel and the Palestinians... facing reprisal after reprisal after reprisal with no one remembering where it started and too few players having enough forgiveness or wisdom in their hearts to bring it to an end.

We the People are the only authority now that have the power to do anything about this. Congress has already buckled under and no other nation, group of nations, or organization is, without us, powerful enough to turn this around. We have very few leaders in Congress. Most are followers. Most have been negligent and irresponsible and those who have been deficient will now resist admitting they were ever wrong. It's up to you to help change the direction we're headed. You. Every voice is needed and every voice counts. You need to become informed and you need to share what you know publicly. There's not much time left.

## The Critical Choice

### Useful references:

Beyond Torture: U.S. Violations of Occupation Law in Iraq

<http://www.cesr.org/downloads/Beyond%20Torture%20US%20Violations%20of%20Occupation%20Law%20in%20Iraq.pdf>

(403K PDF) documents ten categories of war crimes and other serious violations of international law being committed by the Bush Administration in Iraq as a matter of routine policy.

Tearing up the Rules: The Illegality of Invading Iraq

<http://www.cesr.org/iraq/docs/tearinguptherules.pdf>

(315K PDF) is a comprehensive analysis of why war against Iraq is unequivocally illegal.

## The Critical Choice

### Murderers, Cowards, Liars, and Cheats

June 8, 2004



**W**e are fast becoming a nation of murderers, cowards, liars, and cheats. When I began writing about this administration and its cowardly policies I had no idea that so many Americans would line up behind it. So now I see that there are many, but still too few Americans who are willing to tell the simple truth about, or take responsibility for, what has occurred.

I will not dwell on the fact that this President came to power through fraud and deceit, but I do want to point out that once all the facts were on the table the mainstream media ignored the truth of it. This president was never legally elected and the fraud has been duly documented.<sup>1</sup> And here I am talking about facts that came to light after the Supreme Court gave Bush the election, not before. I just want to point out that those who perpetrated the crimes were treasonous cheats and those of us who allowed these liars and cheats to get away with it are accomplices. This is not the worst of it.

When the United States was attacked on September 11, 2001 approximately 3,000 Americans lost their lives. No one ever talks about why we were attacked. We just refer to those who did the deed as deranged, fanatical terrorists. But the truth is they had very good reasons for doing what they did.<sup>2</sup> This was the response that we should have expected after the United States' cruel foreign policy resulted in the unconscionable deaths of over 500,000 Iraqi children, the disenfranchisement of the Palestinian people, and the disenfranchisement of the entire populations of Saudi Arabia and adjacent lands who are not privileged to belong to the royal family.

The attack on the United States was for cause and we as a people have been unwilling to acknowledge it or even talk about it. Murderers, cowards, liars, and cheats... We the People.

So a handful of zealots decided to take revenge for our dastardly policies. They planned their revenge and attacked us, killing 3,000 of our people. They were declaring war on the United States and they believed they had a right to do so. Personally, I believe they have a

## The Critical Choice

point. And in response, what did we do? We launched military operations against Afghanistan and Iraq, killing or maiming in the process tens of thousands of innocent civilians... men, women, and children who had nothing to do with 9/11. We called what the 'terrorists' did murder, but we don't call what we did murder... we call it 'collateral damage'. It's murder just the same. Why? Because much of the 'collateral damage' was carried out with total negligence<sup>3</sup> and a barbaric disregard of human life. And in some cases the killings were premeditated summary and extra-judicial executions<sup>4</sup> authorized at the highest levels; some were spontaneous unauthorized executions carried out by individual troops.

The most powerful nation on earth unleashed its lethal force on two helpless countries because we didn't have the courage and honor to go after the real 'terrorists' in a legal manner. We just rampaged through the countryside<sup>5</sup> indiscriminately killing and maiming people who were in the way.

It could have been worse. We could have just obliterated them off the map with aerial carpet bombings, but at least we didn't do that. And because we didn't do that we say that we were as careful as we could have been. I'm wondering now how much depleted uranium we used in shelling populated areas. Is anybody asking?

After the smoke is cleared, the truth is, tens of thousands of innocent men, women, and children were maimed or murdered<sup>6</sup> (and perhaps there are more to follow) in their own homeland by a nation of cowards, liars and cheats. How can I use these words? In order to accomplish what we did we had to totally disregard international law and our own Constitution. What we did fits the legal definition of crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.<sup>7</sup> And the media and We the People fell silent in the face of it. Murderers, cowards, liars and cheats.

Now we are facing a national election. No candidate is telling the full truth of what happened. No one who comes close to telling the truth has a chance of winning the election. The President of the United States is a murderer, a coward, a liar and a cheat.

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Only one candidate is saying that he ought to be impeached but no one is suggesting that he ought to pay for the crimes that he has committed. And so we are all in it with him.

When crimes are committed in your name, and you say nothing and do nothing even though you live in a free country that allows you to tell the truth... in my book that is a disgrace. By allowing these crimes to go unpunished we are joining with this administration as accomplices. And this man is allowed to stand for the Presidency? It is unconscionable. I don't know how that can be, but that's how it is.

Let's talk about religion. This president stands before a nation and professes a strong and heartfelt religious calling. He says he thinks that God wants him to be President and wanted him to engage in these hateful acts. I don't know what God he is talking about. Is it the same God that gave us the Ten Commandments? Do you think Jesus would approve of us killing or maiming tens of thousands of innocent civilians because we need to secure oil for ourselves or because of what happened on 9/11? Do you really believe that this is what any honorable student or servant of God would have done?

Like I said, a nation of murderers, cowards, liars and cheats. Cheating God, cheating our children and our children's children, cheating ourselves, cheating the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, cheating the world... A disgrace.

I know you don't think of yourself as having malice in your heart, but if you allow other people to think for you and substitute their morality for yours, and act in your name without objection, you are just as responsible for the results as they are. I will leave you with this quote from my book, *The Answer*<sup>8</sup>:

*“And if you haven't the courage to tell the truth, or the consciousness to honor the truth, or the love to love the truth, then one day you will not have the truth to tell, and soon thereafter you will not live in a place that will acknowledge the truth when it is told, and not long after that the truth will not be told for it will no longer be allowed. You cannot hope to be a traitor to life, and then expect to live in a free and just society. Who says so? I say so. Where is it written? In every*



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*blade of grass. In the sparrow's song. In a snowflake. In every sunrise and sunset. In every star that lights the sky. In every child's eyes. Every river that flows and every kiss of a lovers lips... says it's so. Because it IS so. And what if you are not a public servant or a member of the media? Every intentional dishonesty diminishes the fabric of life for we are all part of the weave. I do not say this as an invitation to judge others, but rather as a reminder from time to time to look to see if the threads of our own expression are holding life together or allowing it to unravel. Whoever you are, wherever you are, you are a part of every destiny. Everyone makes a difference, and simply the willingness to hold fast to life, to have faith, compassion and courage is what binds us together and creates the opportunity for us, and our children, and our children's children, to experience the blessings of freedom, happiness, and success.”*

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Links / references:

- 1 <http://www.citizensforimpeachingbush.com/illegal.htm>
- 2 <http://www.gpln.com/childrenofiraq.htm>
- 3 <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5045772/>
- 4 <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/forum/forumnew121.php>
- 5 <http://www.gpln.com/maybejusttears.htm>
- 6 [http://www.truthout.org/docs\\_04/051804A.shtml](http://www.truthout.org/docs_04/051804A.shtml)
- 7 <http://www.gpln.com/impeacharticles.htm>
- 8 <http://www.gpln.com/buytheanswer.htm>

## The Critical Choice

### Strategy for Achieving World Peace

May 24, 2004



**A**nnounce a new dedication to the rule of law, which law shall be brought into alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Direct every individual of every nation to read this document and come into alignment with it because that's the new law of the land. No substitutes. No amendments.

## The Critical Choice

Maybe these are just tears

May 19, 2004



In my opinion, any civic organization, church, synagogue, school, business, or government that will not publicly endorse and attempt to align itself with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not deserve to have members, customers, employees, or the support of its people. In fact, one might conclude from reading the Preamble to the Declaration, that the deepest hope of the common people on our entire planet would agree with me on this.

From the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

*"Now, therefore, the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction."*

So as for the idea of discretion with respect to the use of your email list or your organization's email list, I think you should give some thought as to how it should be used. Is everything you don't want to see, read, or hear, spam?

Maybe you and your organization would be more along the path of enlightenment if one of the children in the photos below was your child or grandchild.

How much would it cost you to simply stand up and say, "I / We endorse the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?" Of course that would mean you would have to read it first. And how much of an inconvenience would it be for you to do that, and how much of a sacrifice would it be for you to make the statement I just suggested...

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and then try to live up to what you've said? Of course, the living up to, would be the hard part. How much courage would it take for you to suggest it to the other members of the club, business, or organization to which you belong?

Why would you feel the need to argue with me about this?

People say to me, well "Don't bother me here, this is my work address" or "this is politics, I'm not interested."

You call this politics? This is not politics. This is just called being a human being.



<http://scoop.co.nz/mason/features/?s=warimages>

## The Critical Choice



*"Can you help get my arms back? Do you think the doctors can get me another pair of hands? If I don't get a pair of hands I will commit suicide," cried Ali Ismaeel Abbas, 12*

<http://www.oilempire.us/warcrime.html>

<http://scoop.co.nz/mason/features/?s=warimages>



When you look into the eyes of your own child or grandchild, try to understand that other people have children too. This girl... just lost her mother. Maybe these are just tears.

These people and their families did not get to vote on whether or not they wanted to make this sacrifice. If in the beginning you knew or contemplated that one of these might be your child or grandchild, how would you have voted?

## The Critical Choice

### Response to Ray Reynold's Letter

May 17, 2004



I am in receipt of an email that purportedly was written by Ray Reynolds SFC of the Iowa's Army National Guard. It was sent to me by a member of the Vashon Rotary Club, of Vashon, WA. In this email Ray says that he is ready to challenge anyone who would dispute the facts he itemized in his communication (see below.) I accept that challenge and I am here to dispute these so called "facts." In fact, some of what are called facts, I would say are so entirely ridiculous that I first suspected that the letter was a fake and was not written by this person at all, or at least not by anyone who had knowledge of, or intended to tell the full truth about the items mentioned in the letter, or include the context in which those things are supposed to be occurring. The letter is what I would call a fabrication and at best propaganda and, in fact, the items mentioned would be irrelevant even if they were true.

You might ask, who am I? I am no one special, just a citizen of these United States who was forced to stop working in order to defend the honor and dignity of his country as well as his own honor and dignity as a human being.

I did not begin this journey because I was inspired by international law or because I thought I was required by the Constitution of the United States to do so. I was informed simply by my own conscience, the power of reason, and a sense of compassion. But now, through reading and study, I have learned that appropriate action would have been expected of me in any event under principles of international law and the Constitution of the United States.

Under Article VI, Section 2 of the Constitution, otherwise known as the Supremacy Clause, established International Law — which is to say, The Nuremberg Principles, the Principles of The Hague Convention, The Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Charter, and others — is the Supreme Law of the Land. That means these laws take precedence over my personal to-do list, my appointment calendar, my company's policies, my

## The Critical Choice

contract with my company, my town and my county's ordinances, my state's laws, and, most of the law that's been passed by Congress, including the tax code, if any of these laws, ordinances, or corporate and personal priorities would be in conflict with them.

In other words, under international law, I do not have the luxury to sit by and be an observer, if what I am observing are crimes against humanity, crimes against peace, or war crimes. If I were to stand by and do nothing, knowing that crimes were being committed in my name, I would be an accomplice to those crimes. And that would be true regardless of my political party affiliation or my religion. It wouldn't matter if I agreed philosophically with those who planned, ordered, and carried out the crimes. It would not even matter if I were not a citizen of the United States. But most particularly because I am a citizen of these United States, I would have a duty and an obligation to attempt to put a stop to it. As a citizen of these United States — the country that originally brought these laws into being and made them the Supreme Law of the Land — I certainly have a duty and an obligation to faithfully preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of these United States.

It certainly would be inappropriate for me to sit on the sidelines while American soldiers are dying — while innocent men, women and children are suffering and dying — and do nothing while my government is carrying out criminal acts. And certainly anyone interested in supporting our troops, would do everything they could do to prevent new recruits from inadvertently becoming criminals, as well as stopping those now serving from participating in ongoing criminal behavior, particularly when under international law soldiers do not have the luxury of claiming later that their criminal behavior can be excused because they were ordered to engage in that behavior by someone higher up the command, even if that someone is the Commander-in-Chief.

Now let's be real here. If the United States is sponsoring criminal acts, is there anyone who is going to come knocking at my door claiming that I am guilty and am subject to punishment for doing nothing, for simply being an observer? No, I don't think so. In fact,

## The Critical Choice

those who are carrying out these acts would prefer that I do nothing... that I remain silent, and/or that I even applaud what they're doing.

And so you might say to me, "Who says that under international law, crimes have taken place? I can show you great things that we are doing in Afghanistan and Iraq. For one thing a terrible leader has been deposed. And here, I've given you a list of evidence demonstrating that progress is being made." And I say to you, that the crimes that have been committed do not justify the 'good' that you claim has been or is being accomplished. Maybe it is true that most of our troops are not aware that they are committing crimes. But a simple body count of the innocents who have been killed should, in and of itself, be enough to prove my point, if such a count were taken. The fact that no attempt to take such a body count was allowed, is probably a crime in and of itself, but I am not going to rest my arguments on that. Let me suggest that it would behoove you to understand what crimes have been committed so you can understand how perverse this entire war is.

Toward that end I have listed several sources later in this letter for your review. You can verify that any information I am providing on international law is accurate by contacting any expert in international law that you like. I might tell you that the law itself recognizes as an expert, if I am not mistaken, any experienced professor of international law from any major law school in the world. I suggest that you give any one of them a call. Surely it would have been more efficient had the mainstream broadcast media made the call for you and then reported the results of their research via the airwaves, but in the absence of that, if you call such an expert yourself, I don't think they will turn you away. I think if you call them they will tell you that it is clear that crimes have been and are being committed by the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq, which is to say, committed by those who planned, those who gave the orders, and those who carried out and are to this day carrying out orders that violate established international law in at least these three categories:

Crimes against peace · Crimes against humanity · War crimes



## The Critical Choice

Will any of these experts say that Americans who never lifted a finger to try to stop these crimes are guilty of a crime? My guess is, no. But also I don't think that they would say, if asked, that it speaks very well of us... of our nation, of our family and friends, of our community, of our churches and synagogues, our educational institutions, or our civic organizations, that we have allowed such injury to occur to such great numbers of innocent victims — that we allowed this to happen and continue to be silent even to this day — given that we knew or could have known and should have known that crimes were being committed.

So, assuming crimes were and are being committed, who will enforce the Constitution if the Commander-in-Chief and members of Congress will not, and if the international community of nations cannot? I suggest to you that there is only one last recourse... and that recourse is you, me and our fellow citizens. We have the power to protest, to write letters, to make calls, to do something... and as a last resort, to remove from office anyone who will not honor and enforce the rule of law, and to replace that person with someone who will. If we fail to do that, I believe the failure of The Great Experiment will be very close at hand. And if and when it comes, it is we who will be responsible for it and it is our children and our grandchildren who will pay the price for it.

And so now I say that it will not be enough to put a stop to these crimes. Justice now will require that those who perpetrated these crimes must be held accountable. There is still time to stand up and be counted if you have the courage to do the research and the honor to do your duty. To help you I am herewith making a substantial amount of information available to you. And in doing so I am asking you to defend your country... to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of these United States, which you are obligated to do by virtue of your citizenship and by virtue of your respect for basic human decency:

- <http://www.gpln.com/citizen.htm>
- <http://www.gpln.com/impeacharticles.htm>

drafted by Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General of the United States

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- [http://www.rise4news.net/Impeachment\\_Resolution.html](http://www.rise4news.net/Impeachment_Resolution.html)
- [http://articles.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1111/is\\_1803\\_301/ai\\_63842594](http://articles.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1111/is_1803_301/ai_63842594)
- <http://www.tridentploughshares.org/greenock/qimbqk.php>

*"The Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal went so far as to declare anyone with knowledge of illegal activities had an opportunity to do something about it was a potential criminal under international law unless the person had taken affirmative measures to prevent the commission of crime. This is Reference 35 in the war crimes trials decisions, and I would like to repeat that. Anyone with knowledge of illegal activity [who has] an opportunity to do something about it is a potential criminal under international law unless the person takes affirmative measures to prevent the commission of crime."*

- <http://www.gpln.com/childrenofiraq.htm>
- <http://www.gpln.com/openlettertocitizens.htm>
- <http://www.gpln.com/commentary.htm>
- <http://www.citizensforimpeachingbush.com>

Without me personally getting into the other claims that were made in Ray's letter, let me just say that Iraq is not secure and elections are not taking place in every major city as Ray claims. If there were a Democracy in Iraq where elections were taking place and people could vote, I can assure you that they would vote for the right to control their own oil and their own destiny. But I would like to agree with one statement that was made about the media "They have done a very poor job of covering everything that has happened."

If you want to discuss any of this further I invite you to write to me. But I expect you to read the information I've presented first. It is simply a matter of... truth, honor, dignity, compassion, courage, and love... and justice.

Sincerely yours,

Mark A. Goldman  
P.O. Box 1865  
Vashon, WA 98070

### **References of international law:**

U.S. Army's Field Manual 27-10 The Law of Land Warfare

## The Critical Choice

Convention Against Torture  
3rd Geneva Convention  
4th Geneva Convention  
Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928  
International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial  
Discrimination  
International Convention on Civil and Political Rights  
The Nuremberg Principles  
Posse Comitatus Act of 1878  
War Crimes  
U.N. Charter  
Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
Vienna Convention on Consular Relations

Re: Rays Letter Specifically

I do not particularly want to give weight to the points that Ray Reynolds raised because they are irrelevant to the larger issue and I don't want you to weigh point for point what is happening in Iraq before you take responsibility for the atrocities and the damage to the rule of law that has occurred because of our government's flagrant disregard for established principles of international law. But for those who are interested, I refer you to this site to answer most of the particulars mentioned in the letter below:

<http://www.orwelliantimes.com/2004/04/26.html>

All of the above is in response to the following:

## The Critical Choice

### REPORT FROM IRAQ

PONDER THIS when listening to CNN and the Big Three Networks:

*This is a letter from Ray Reynolds, a medic in the Iowa Army National Guard, serving in Iraq*

As I head off to Baghdad for the final weeks of my stay in Iraq, I wanted to say thanks to all of you who did not believe the media. They have done a very poor job of covering everything that has happened. I am sorry that I have not been able to visit all of you during my two week leave back home.

And just so you can rest at night knowing something is happening in Iraq that is noteworthy, I thought I would pass this on to you. This is the list of things that has happened in Iraq recently (Please share it with your friends and compare it to the version that your paper is producing.)

- Over 400,000 kids have up-to-date immunizations.
- School attendance is up 80% from levels before the war.
- Over 1,500 schools have been renovated and rid of the weapons stored there so education can occur.
- The port of Uhm Qasar was renovated so grain can be off-loaded from ships faster.
- The country had its first 2 billion barrel export of oil in August.
- Over 4.5 million people have clean drinking water for the first time ever in Iraq.
- The country now receives 2 times the electrical power it did before the war.
- 100% of the hospitals are open and fully staffed, compared to 35% before the war.
- Elections are taking place in every major city, and city councils are in place.
- Sewer and water lines are installed in every major city.
- Over 60,000 police are patrolling the streets.
- Over 100,000 Iraqi civil defense police are securing the country.
- Over 80,000 Iraqi soldiers are patrolling the streets side by side with U.S. soldiers.
- Over 400,000 people have telephones for the first time ever
- Students are taught field sanitation and hand washing techniques to prevent the spread of germs.
- An interim constitution has been signed.
- Girls are allowed to attend school.
- Textbooks that don't mention Saddam are in the schools for the first time in 30 years.

## The Critical Choice

Don't believe for one second that these people do not want us there. I have met many, many people from Iraq that want us there, and in a bad way. They say they will never see the freedoms we talk about but they hope their children will. We are doing a good job in Iraq and I challenge anyone, anywhere to dispute me on these facts. So If you happen to run into John Kerry, be sure to give him my email address and send him to Denison, Iowa. This soldier will set him straight. If you are like me and very disgusted with how this period of rebuilding has been portrayed, email this to a friend and let them know there are good things happening.

Ray Reynolds, SFC  
Iowa Army National Guard  
234th Signal Battalion

## The Critical Choice

### Religion and Government

May 12, 2004



**R**eligion is sometimes just politics. This is not to say that Jesus was a politician. Just that many of his followers were, and some still are. Jesus never said, “I should be king and you should worship me.” And yet somehow some of his followers convinced the masses to worship him and proclaim him king; if not here exactly, then at least someplace, and if not now, then at least someday. This was probably the most successful political coup in all of history.

Jesus said, “God is closer to you than your own breath,” meaning that your relationship with God is personal and requires no intermediary, no interpreter. Jesus was a teacher, not a politician. And yet once Jesus was out of the picture, those who remained were eventually able to twist his words and his teachings to get his followers to adhere to a formal structure based on their own interpretation of what Jesus was trying to say. And, of course, in their day, and even today, they made themselves the experts and the authority. They might not have even been aware that that’s what they were doing. After all, they were not what Jesus was, so that’s the best they could do.

They were not very enlightened in comparison to Jesus, and even though they tried to understand what he was saying, they never did quite. So instead, they set themselves up as intermediaries and interpreters of “The Word” attributing to themselves authority and power. Jesus never said, “When I’m gone, listen to my disciples... they understand and will write it all down and explain it all to you.” Maybe they said he said that, but I don’t, even for a minute, believe he ever did.

Surely you can understand that any spiritual expression that is not offered freely from your own heart is not what Jesus was advocating. God is not superficial or trivial. I don’t think that God is very impressed by anyone who is just going through the motions. I mean really!! And if you think you have to go through some fixed set of motions, some particular set of doors, or read out of a particular book

## The Critical Choice

to get in touch with God, well that's just not what Jesus said at all... at least I don't think so. But that's the way a lot of religion is practiced and that's what a lot of religious advocates would have you believe. And this is not unique to Christianity.

When an elected official takes his oath of office, he gives his word that he will preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. Any individual who makes a personal decision to take office and then not abide by the guiding principles established under the Constitution and the body of law that follows from it, and favors instead his own interpretation of some other law, i.e., religious law, he violates both his oath of office and the law he tells himself he's following. In pretending to be something he is not, he disqualifies himself as an appropriate advocate of either the Constitution or his religion and he betrays himself, his country, and maybe much more than that.

If I'm not mistaken, most oaths of office are taken with one hand on the Bible and sometimes an oath will end with the words 'so help me God.' So when someone takes an oath of office he promises God that he will preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States—not the Bible, God's law, or his interpretation of it. And I think God would want that promise kept. After all, it took a long time and a lot of blood to bring that Constitution into being and I think God had a lot to do with it.

## The Critical Choice

### Change Course to Here

May 9, 2004



**T**he only strategy that we should pursue right now in Iraq and in Afghanistan is to pull back all troops who are engaged in offensive missions and begin an extensive humanitarian relief effort designed to feed the hungry, heal the sick and wounded, rebuild housing, repair water, sanitation systems, and other utilities. This is what should have been done as soon as Saddam Hussein was captured. You do this by announcing to the world that this is what you are going to do to bring U.S. policies into alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Anyone held in prison must be processed according to standards approved by the International Red Cross which presumably would include making their names, charges against them, and where they are being held available for all to see. There should be some administrative procedure, probably administered by the United Nations, which would allow prisoners to have legal representation and their cases adjudicated, and this includes those held at Guantanamo. The U.S. should join other nations in endorsing the International Criminal Court.

There was never a war declared on Iraq and the Iraqi people were never implicated in any attack or planned attack on the United States. Iraqi citizens who fired on U.S. troops in Iraq probably had a legal right to do so in defense of their homes, their families, and their culture. Our "liberation" of Iraq has resulted in the deaths of many thousands of innocent civilians. There was really no excuse for this.

The United States has behaved like a criminal in both Iraq and Afghanistan and any behaviors that can be identified as criminal ought to be shut down. If this administration is incapable of identifying such behaviors on its own, then legal experts recommended or supervised by the United Nations should be brought in to do it for them.

If America is to regain its name, and the people of this country are to reclaim their honor, then this strategy must be pursued—not as a public relations gesture, but as a real program designed by people who



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really want to accomplish the task. It may now be impossible for U.S. troops to keep the peace in Iraq, but they could be helpful in support of the UN and other nations who would answer the call if this call were put out into the universe.

American troops could and should still be stationed in Iraq to help keep the peace, but they should be under the command of a United Nations task force set up for just that purpose.

Of course, the most effective thing the American people could do to help regain our good name would be to impeach and try Bush, and other members of his administration, for war crimes committed. In the absence of this resolve we should at least pursue the above.

The real reason for bringing war to Iraq was to control their oil. The stated reason for bringing war to Iraq was fear. Fear of what Saddam Hussein might have or do. Fear is not a legal defense to the charge of committing war crimes.

*If I were to bomb your neighbor's home and in the process accidentally kill your wife and your daughter, how would you want a court to handle this? Suppose later I claimed that the reason I bombed your neighbor was that I had reason to believe that he was going to kill me and I so took it upon myself to kill him first. I also claim I couldn't help it that your family got in the way. Unfortunately, as it turns out my information was wrong. Maybe he really wasn't planning to kill me after all. My defense is this: at the time, I really thought I had good information. Besides, this neighbor of yours was a really bad person and now we're all free of him, so actually you and the rest of society should thank me for this.*

*What would a legitimate court say about this defense? Who is really responsible for these deaths? Was what I did a crime? Should I have to pay for my mistake in any way? Do I owe compensation to you and your family for my negligence or poor judgment? Should I be put on trial for manslaughter or murder? What would you think about a society or a court that would just let me go without finding any fault at all with what I did?*

—M.A.G  
7/11/04

## The Critical Choice

Not Credible... just a disgrace

May 6, 2004



**T**his President and his administration's explanation of what happened at Abu Ghraib is not credible. It's just a disgrace.

This President has demonstrated a total lack of respect for the Constitution. In fact, I believe, he does not understand that the Constitution applies to him. In fact, I believe he thinks he has the authority to give permission to others to suspend the Constitution. And he uses that authority with impunity. With whom, you might ask?... the military, the secret service, the FBI, the CIA, and the Attorney General, among others. In fact, any American who is at all conscious, knows that these institutions often do, in the routine operation of their assignments, operate in secret and outside the authority of the Constitution. Our culture even glorifies such infidelity as evidenced by the movies we produce and the stars that are born who play parts in them. It didn't start with Bush, but it continues with his administration in the most vile form we have seen to date.

Rumsfeld's explanation that an investigation was begun when word first broke (which was last year!) about these abuses is a direct admission of guilt at the highest levels. As soon as any responsible military person or person in the chain of command, from private to President, became aware of even a hint that abuses were taking place, they should have spoken up, held meetings, instituted new controls and rules of engagement, delivered lectures, and taken every imaginable step possible to let those who are serving know, that if anyone ever gets caught even coming close to abusing any prisoner, that heads would roll... even before, or in addition to launching an investigation.

No one in uniform did any of these things... everyone who knew and said nothing should be dismissed from the service without honor. Just the suggestion that something was amiss should have been enough. The military's answer to this... they've put up signs that make it a high offense to take any pictures in there at all. Great. The

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message: "The crime was that we got caught and we're not going to let that happen again."

And Bush, the most polished liar and hypocrite that I have ever seen, went on TV to explain to the Arab population that in America our system of government honors the Constitution and the rule of law, that our government is transparent, that an accused is considered innocent until proven guilty. This, not more than two weeks after refusing to testify under oath, refusing to testify alone, refusing to have his words recorded. This, while the administration argues at the Supreme Court that prisoners at Guantanamo Bay do not have even the most basic rights because they are not being held on U.S. soil. (If you believe that the rights people have—people who are in your control—is a function of where you decide to hold them, then, brother, you do not believe in human rights.) This, while thousands of Iraqi citizens were assembled outside Abu Ghraib, protesting, telling reporters that the U.S. military came in the night and took away their fathers and sons and husbands and they have not been heard from since... for months... no charges... no representation... no information... no respect for human rights at all. A violation of international law and human decency. And this is not only happening in Iraq. It is happening right here in these United States.

By the way, we know the body count of American soldiers, but do we know the body count of Iraqi children... do they have rights... do they have representation? How did they become the enemy of the United States? I want to know how many children have been killed or injured since this criminal war began. **I WANT TO KNOW!!!**

This entire administration is a disgrace. This Congress is a disgrace. Our entire legal profession... a disgrace. The military is a disgrace. All took an oath... all betraying their country. Our educational institutions—a disgrace. Who, I would like to know... who is left who will speak out to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Who will speak out to defend basic human rights. Who??? If you go to the internet you will find them. But if you turn on mainstream media... the radio, the TV or read a newspaper... very, very, very few. When did lying, withholding the truth, limiting dissent become patriotism? Yesterday, we heard reports that Disney (God,

## The Critical Choice

Mom, Mickey Mouse, and Apple Pie) was blocking the release of a new Michael Moore movie that talks about Bush, his administration, and his relationship with the bin Laden family. Why?

A national tragedy and disgrace. Not only because of what was done at Abu Ghraib, but because of what we see (or don't see) when we look in the mirror.

As far as I can tell, at least Osama bin Laden is not a liar and a hypocrite. Does this mean that I support bin Laden or terrorism? NO! It means I support the rule of law. And I have respect for those who will defend human rights and justice. I would hope you would too.

If you had the courage to read this far, I invite you to read the rest of what I've written, too. Read it all... then tell me how wrong I am. What are you afraid of?

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### An Open Letter to My Fellow Citizens

May 3, 2004



**T**errorists are usually people who have no means other than by force to be heard in the political arena. The terrorist who attacked the United States on 9/11 (i.e., Assuming it was Osama bin Laden) promised to attack us because he believed that the United States was responsible for the great unjust suffering of hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children. He probably knew and therefore believed that cries for justice from these innocent victims were never heard, even though every legal attempt to have them heard was pursued. He believes he had and does have a moral right and obligation to attack the United States in seeking justice, given that there is currently no other avenue of justice open to him or the victims he believes he represents. He might believe he has a legal right under international law as well.

I believe that if the United States and bin Laden were to have the opportunity to face off at an international tribunal made up of honorable and independent legal scholars who were free to adjudicate this case, absent all potential reprisals and political pressure, that bin Laden would possibly prevail and that the United States surely would not.

I believe that if there were a working international criminal court that was able to adjudicate Crimes against Peace and Crimes against Humanity, that various Presidents of the United States and others in high office would be held guilty and accountable for crimes committed and that the current President and several others in his administration would spend the rest of their lives in prison along with at least two other living Presidents and various officials who served with them.

Further, I believe that if the President and others serving in his administration would be impeached and tried as proscribed under the Constitution, and if members of Congress honored the values and intent specified therein, that the President and other members of his administration would be found guilty and removed from office.

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Under Article VI of the United States Constitution it is held that Treaties signed by the United States become the Supreme Law of the Land. Article VI also holds that "...all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States" are obligated to support the Constitution and such treaties by virtue of the oath of office they take before assuming office. Failure to do so would presumably be sufficient cause for impeachment. The Supreme Court has since held that certain other agreements between or among nations have the same status as treaties do.

The charges against the named and unnamed defendants mentioned above include the following, which I am extracting from various sections of Francis A. Boyle's brilliant book, "Destroying World Order:" (I am not a legal scholar but I am presenting my views according to my understanding of the law as I have so far exposed myself to it. What I am writing here has not been reviewed by anyone who would be considered a legal expert, although Professor Boyle is certainly widely recognized as such. He did not read, comment on, or approve this letter. Some conclusions that I drew from my readings are not necessarily anyone else's but my own.)

The charges I refer to include crimes or violations as defined by or specified by or under the following:

1. Committing the international crime of genocide against the children of Iraq.
2. Gross and consistent pattern of violations of basic human rights guaranteed the children of Iraq by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.
3. The Nuremberg Crime Against Peace; The Nuremberg Crime Against Humanity, and The Nuremberg War Crimes.
4. The Hague Regulations on Land Warfare of 1907.
5. The Declaration of London on Sea Warfare of 1907.
6. The Hague Draft Rules of Aerial Warfare of 1923.
7. The Four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977.
8. The International Crime of Genocide as defined by the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 and the United States' own Genocide convention Implementation Act of 1987, 18 U.S.C. §1901.
9. The Nuremberg Code on Medical Experimentation.
10. Trying to suspend the Constitutional Writ of Habeas Corpus.
11. Rounding up and incarcerating foreigners en masse.
12. Establishing Kangaroo courts.
13. Depriving at least two U.S. Citizens of their constitutional rights by means of military incarceration.

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14. Interfering with the constitutional right of defendants in criminal cases to be represented by lawyers.
15. Violating and subverting the Posse Comitatus Act.
16. Conducting unlawful and unreasonable searches and seizures.
17. Violating the first amendment rights of the free exercise of religion, freedom of speech, peaceable assembly, and the right to petition the government for redress of grievances.
18. Packing the federal judiciary with hand-picked judges belonging to the totalitarian Federalist Society and undermining the judicial independence of the Constitution's Article III federal court system.
19. Violating the U.S. War Crimes Act.
20. Violating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
21. Re-instituting or attempting to re-institute the infamous "Cointelpro" Program.
22. Violating the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and the Covenant Against Torture.
23. Instituting the totalitarian Total Information Awareness Program and establishing a totalitarian Northern Military Command for the United States of America itself.
24. Violating the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution: U.S. soldiers in the military service are overwhelmingly poor White, Black, and Latino and their military service is based on the coercion of a system that has denied viable economic opportunities to these classes of citizens.
25. Violations of the U.S. Army Field Manual 27-10 (1956).
26. The President had not received a Declaration of War by Congress when he declared that he would go to war regardless of the views of the American people. (No declaration of war was ever received, possibly because war by definition is conflict between nations only. International law does provide for action against terrorists, but does not include the action taken by the United States.)
27. Violation of Article 2(4) of the United National Charter, The Nuremberg Charter, Judgment and Principles, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and numerous other international treaties and agreements.
28. Threatening an act of war or carrying out an act of war against Iraq is not an act of self-defense under any established international law. In fact, such a theory has under international law been thoroughly discredited.

The purpose of this letter is to introduce the reader to information that is vital to our Democracy and to world peace. This recitation of laws, treaties, and other standards or authorities that have been denigrated by this and other administrations is meant to be fair notice to each citizen that every one of us has an obligation and a duty to investigate the facts alluded to herein and if we find that the facts warrant it, that we take meaningful steps to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, indeed every world citizen.

I personally am reporting that having read the charges above, as enumerated in various documents, and reviewed a good deal of

## The Critical Choice

substantiating documentation pertaining thereto, that I have formed a personal opinion that George W. Bush and other members of his administration deserve to be impeached and if found guilty of the charges made, ought to be removed from office.

I believe that it is incumbent upon members of the House of Representatives to look into this matter and carry out their duty in an appropriate manner. Further, I believe that it is the duty of every citizen to do the same and to petition your representatives to do the job they promised they would do when they took their oath of office, assuming, of course, that you conclude after suitable research that such a petition is warranted.

Please forward this information to other citizens so that they might consider my findings and do their duty as they see fit.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Goldman

### References / links:

- <http://www.citizensforimpeachingbush.com>
- <http://www.gpln.com/impeacharticles.htm>  
Articles of Impeachment drafted by Ramsey Clark,  
former U.S. Attorney General

*"In international legal terms, the Bush, Jr. administration should be viewed as constituting an ongoing criminal conspiracy under international criminal law in violation of the Nuremberg Charter, the Nuremberg Judgment, and the Nuremberg Principles, due to its formulation and undertaking of war policies which are legally akin to those perpetrated by the Nazi regime in pre-World War II Germany."*

Francis A. Boyle, Destroying World Order



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Regarding the last letter, here is a case in point:

### **U.S. diplomats' letter to Bush**



*The full text of a letter from some 50 retired U.S. diplomats urging President Bush to reverse his Middle East policy.*

Printed in the BBC News World Edition May 4, 2004

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/3681999.stm>

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Dear Mr President:

We former U.S. diplomats applaud our 52 British colleagues who recently sent a letter to Prime Minister Tony Blair criticising his Middle East policy and calling on Britain to exert more influence over the United States.

As retired foreign service officers we care deeply about our nation's foreign policy and U.S. credibility in the world.

We also are deeply concerned by your April 14 endorsement of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's unilateral plan to reject the rights of three million Palestinians, to deny the right of refugees to return to their homeland, and to retain five large illegal settlement blocs in the occupied West Bank.

This plan defies UN Security Council resolutions calling for Israel's return of occupied territories.

You have placed U.S. diplomats, civilians and military doing their jobs overseas in an untenable and even dangerous position

It ignores international laws declaring Israeli settlements illegal.

It flouts UN Resolution 194, passed in 1948, which affirms the right of refugees to return to their homes or receive compensation for the loss

## The Critical Choice

of their property and assistance in resettling in a host country should they choose to do so.

And it undermines the Road Map for peace drawn up by the Quartet, including the US. Finally, it reverses longstanding American policy in the Middle East.

Your meeting with Sharon followed a series of intensive negotiating sessions between Israelis and Americans, but which left out Palestinians.

In fact, you and Prime Minister Sharon consistently have excluded Palestinians from peace negotiations.

Former Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo voiced the overwhelming reaction of people around the world when he said: "I believe President Bush declared the death of the peace process today".

By closing the door to negotiations with Palestinians and the possibility of a Palestinian state, you have proved that the United States is not an even-handed peace partner.

You have placed U.S. diplomats, civilians and military doing their jobs overseas in an untenable and even dangerous position.

Your unqualified support of Sharon's extra-judicial assassinations, Israel's Berlin Wall-like barrier, its harsh military measures in occupied territories, and now your endorsement of Sharon's unilateral plan are costing our country its credibility, prestige and friends.

It is not too late to reassert American principles of justice and fairness in our relations with all the peoples of the Middle East.

Support negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis, with the United States serving as a truly honest broker.

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A return to the time-honored American tradition of fairness will reverse the present tide of ill will in Europe and the Middle East - even in Iraq.

Because the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is at the core of the problems in the Middle East, the entire region - and the world - will rejoice along with Israelis and Palestinians when the killing stops and peace is attained.

### Signatories include

Andrew I Killgore, Ambassador to Qatar, 1977-1980

Richard H Curtiss, former chief inspector, U.S. Information Agency

Colbert C Held, Retired FSO and author

John Gunther Dean, former Ambassador to India

Thomas J Carolan, Counsel General Istanbul, '88-'92

C Edward Bernier, Counselor of Embassy, Information and Culture, Islamabad, Pakistan

Donald A Kruse, American Consul in Jerusalem

Ambassador Edward L Peck, former Chief of Mission in Iraq and Mauritania

John Powell, Admin Counselor in Beirut, '75-'76

John Gunther Dean, last position held U.S. Ambassador to India

Greg Thielmann, Director, Office for Strategic Proliferation and Military Affairs, Bureau of Intelligence and Research

James Akins, Ambassador to Saudi Arabia

Talcott Seeyle, Ambassador to Syria

Eugene Bird, Counselor of Embassy in Saudi Arabia

Richard H Nolte, Ambassador to Egypt

Ray Close, Chief of Station Jeddah, Saudi Arabia 1971-1979

Shirl McArthur, Commercial Attache, Bangkok

Thomas J Scotese, Ambassador to Yemen 1975-1978

Robert V Keeley, Ambassador to Greece

Edward RM Kane, CIA Deputy Chief of Station in Iraq

## The Critical Choice

### Mission Accomplished

May 2, 2004



**M** ISSION ACCOMPLISHED is the one thing George W. Bush said during his presidency that was true. Because the real mission was to secure Iraqi oil for the West and that has been done. No matter how many American or Iraqi citizens have died or will die to secure this victory — no matter what the Iraqi or American people will have to endure from this point forward — there's probably nothing that will turn back the clock on that now.

The price of oil, if free markets actually worked and/or if the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was really the law of the land, would be higher than you or I have ever paid for it, and the people who live in countries that own the oil would probably live as well or better than you or I do. All you need to do to understand the main thrust of U.S. foreign policy is see where in the world the U.S. has stationed troops and, if you have enough insight to connect the dots, you will understand what their purpose is.

As an American, we might think we should give thanks that we live in the most powerful country in the world—a country that can obtain for us resources that support our standard of living. I'm glad I live here but not because of that... because one price I now discover that I will have to pay for this wealth and security is the realization that my government is engaged in an illegitimate scheme to defraud people in every corner of the globe. And if I ever turn my back on the truth and simply accept this reality without objection, I will then have to live with the fact that as an American, the most sacred principles I believe make up the foundation of my consciousness —basic principles of justice — will be defiled.

I realize that there are those who might say, as Madeline Albright once said—"I think this is a very hard choice, but the price... we think the price is worth it,"—but, I am not, and do not intend to be, one of them.

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An Open Letter to Candidates for President

April 28, 2004



Dear Presidential Hopeful:

I don't think any candidate is worthy of the office of President of the United States if he or she is timid about protecting and defending the Constitution. After all, the only thing a President really promises to do when he or she takes office is just that.

My research indicates that Bush has violated his oath of office in any number of ways, doing serious damage to the Constitution as well as to international law and other standards of human decency. I personally, along with others, have documented his criminal behavior. If you do not believe that Bush deserves to be impeached then I believe you have been negligent in preparing yourself for office. If you think he does deserve to be impeached, and yet are afraid to say so, then perhaps you are currently violating your own oath of office. I believe the only way we are going to get our country back on track is if the people of this country are willing to vote for candidates who have both the qualifications to do the job and also the courage to keep their word of honor once they are elected.

At this point, the only national candidate that is qualified for the job and has publicly called for Bush's impeachment is Ralph Nader. If you ever want to be eligible for my vote, you will have to demonstrate that you have what it takes. One candidate already qualifies.

Best Regards,

Mark A. Goldman

<http://www.citizensforimpeachingbush.com>

<http://www.gpln.com/commentary.htm>

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### High Crimes and Misdemeanors

April 17, 2004



I believe that George W. Bush is a criminal who should be impeached and then prosecuted for murder and other high crimes and misdemeanors.

I believe he has demonstrated malfeasance in office and is responsible for the deaths of 3,000 innocent American civilians who were killed on Sept. 11, 2001. He is also responsible for the deaths, injuries, homelessness, and endless suffering of many more thousands of innocent civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I believe that he is guilty of covering up the crimes and misdemeanors of his father and others, the evidence of which has been removed from public view when he issued Executive Order 13233, a despicable executive order which makes the Presidential papers of Reagan forward — papers that belong to the American people — secret for his own unjust purposes.

I believe that this President was not legally elected to the office he now holds. I believe his election was a fraud and he allowed the fraud to go unpunished and in doing so, aided and abetted the perpetrators and became one of them. He has violated basic ethical standards established for elected public servants in any number of ways, including offering favors to constituents in exchange for undeserved support or for his own unjust purposes. He has attacked the Constitution of the United States by undermining its most sacred tenets, including usurping Congressional authority and responsibility for declaring war, fostering legislation that removes basic protections, civil liberties, and long standing rights reserved for American citizens and others.

I believe he has obfuscated attempts to competently investigate his wrong doings and I believe he has enticed others to participate with him in carrying out his wrongful acts. I believe in dismantling basic Constitutional protections and values, he has harmed the reputation of

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America, its citizens, and has set back the cause of freedom and peace in the world to the detriment of every world citizen.

I believe what I have described, when considered in its totality, constitute acts of treason.

My opinion as a layman, expressed herein, is offered without proof but with enough circumstantial evidence, I believe, to justify the initiation of legal proceedings by one or more competent tribunals if any such competency still exists.

Here is the website which contains my partial list of supporting evidence: <http://www.citizensforimpeachingbush.com/>

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### The Real Terrorists

March 20, 2004



It has lately become the favorite propaganda of our government to proclaim that the greatest threat to freedom and democracy in the world is terrorism, where terrorism is defined as the kind of activities in which Osama Bin Laden is engaged. This notion is entirely false.

The fact is, those who make this claim are a much greater threat. And this lie is now being promulgated by people who I might describe as belonging to one of two distinct groups: those who know that what they are saying is false, and those who do not. Both groups are grossly irresponsible and both are extremely destructive to the expansion of freedom and democracy in the world.

The propaganda I speak of is able to take root only because our educational system is failing. We educate our children to not have a proper respect for intellectual integrity. We are asleep at the wheel, and we are also drunk with wealth, power, fear, and success.

I recently heard a lecture<sup>1</sup> by Michael Parenti on National Public Radio. He's a distinguished professor, author, lecturer and human rights activist, and he mentioned various countries where American intervention over the last 50 years systematically and intentionally overthrew reformist, democratic governments, replacing them with tyrants and dictators of our own government's choosing. Of course American Presidents never tell us that this is what they are doing. (Most of the facts and words in this and the next paragraph are his, or my paraphrasing of them.) Off the top of his head he named these places: Guatemala, Guyana, The Dominican Republic, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Syria, Indonesia, Greece, Argentina, Haiti, Bolivia, and other countries. A very incomplete list. In each case we replaced these governments with pro-capitalist military regimes that opened up their markets, resources, and cheap labor (i.e., labor that is underpaid, and under-organized... labor that was beaten into submission by various kinds of intimidation such as death squads and goon squads). The purpose of these incursions generally was to open up these countries to



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American corporate interests or investors on terms that were completely favorable to the investors. In addition, we've been active in covert actions and mercenary wars against popular revolutionary governments in Cuba, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Portugal, South Yemen, Nicaragua, Cambodia, East Timor, Western Sahara. Another incomplete list. We took action against reformist governments in Egypt, Lebanon, Peru, Iran (e.g., replacing Mosedeq with the Shah), Syria, Zaire, Jamaica, the Fiji Islands, Afghanistan. And just in the last few decades exercised our will in places without regard for the people living there... such as in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, North Korea, Laos, Cambodia, Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Libya, Iraq, and Somalia.

And during this time if you heard anything at all about these places, maybe you heard about how many U.S. troops were killed there (troops who had no business being there), but you never heard about the tens of thousands, the hundreds of thousands, the millions who were not Americans who were killed, whose lives were torn apart, whose livelihood was destroyed, whose family and friends and freedom and culture were taken from them.

These are just some of the repressive regimes installed, paid for, supplied, and trained by the CIA and/or other agencies of your government. And at what cost to the people who lived there...? 80,000 killed in El Salvador, 205,000 killed in Guatemala, 500,000 dead in Laos. 600 Mayan Villages—every man, woman, and child—killed by a protégé of the CIA. Over one million people killed in Mozambique, 3 million in Vietnam (300,000 Vietnamese still missing in action), over 300,000 dead in East Timor killed by the Indonesian army—trained, equipped and advised by the Pentagon and the CIA, 2 million killed in Angola, 10,000 killed in Samalia, hundreds of thousands killed in Iraq over the last 12 years, including an estimated 600,000 children who died as a direct or indirect result of the sanctions, bombings, and purposeful destruction of water and sanitation systems, the embargo of drugs and medicines, not including the cancers and deformities that resulted from our use of depleted uranium weapons<sup>2</sup>. And if you listen to our government talk about these places, they don't even talk about them as if real people actually

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lived there. You hear about American casualties, but apparently Americans are the only people who count as real people.

Tell me something... if it was your country that was destroyed or betrayed by American Imperialism, how would you fight back? After all, say you did vote for someone who you believed in but he was overthrown and killed. You did vote to join a union but your co-workers and friends were intimidated... beaten up, or killed. And now you are poor, without rights... laboring for your daily crumbs while the elite of your country, (in cahoots with American corporate interests), prosper, swimming in oil, or whatever the resource happens to be... You pray to God... but where is God?

Well friends, this is our country in action, and all we can say is... I don't believe this, or I didn't know. The truth is, we don't want to believe this, and many of us don't want to know. Up until now we have benefited from our ignorance. But tell me... can you say that all the men, women and children who suffered in all these places were not innocent? Were they less innocent than the 3,000 who went to work that day in September 2001 thinking it was just another day?

Are you innocent? According to Osama Bin Laden you are not. He said in a 1997 interview with CNN reporter, Peter Arnett<sup>3</sup> that you elected these people who did this and you let them do it. After all, who is America? Is it not you? He said you were the ones who let them cheat and destroy the rights of others; you were the ones who allowed 600,000 Iraqi children die for lack of food and medicine. Then he said, that one day there will be a reaction to this American treachery (or rather, he promised that there would be a reaction).

You did know about this interview, didn't you? If not, how come? And now we hear every day on TV that he and all the other terrorists are people who have no conscience, that they are the ones who hate freedom and democracy? And no one stands up to disagree.

If you stop for a moment and listen quietly to that inner voice of humanity within you responding to such a statement ... Can't you just hear the laughter through the tears... Can't you?

We call them terrorists, but the truth is we do have enemies now... people who do hate us. We call them terrorists only because they are

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not a country—they have no real army, no navy, no air force. All they have is the memory of what we did to them—to their families, to their culture, and to the families and the culture of others—and now they have the will to fight back, to take revenge or get us to stop.

Am I saying that setting off bombs in public places is a legitimate form of political expression? I am not. What I am saying is that terrorism begets terrorism and we need to stop it.

Do you want to know how to end this kind of terrorism? I have an answer. It's very simple but it requires great courage and humility. All this war is not necessary. As a people all we have to do is this: Become informed, gain some historical perspective, acquire some understanding and compassion, tell the truth, and then take responsibility for all the injustice that we discover was done in our name... and do it in public. It could and should be a very straightforward process for any truly honorable freedom loving people.

The real question is... is that who we are?

### References:

<sup>1</sup>Michael Parenti, "Arrogance of Empire" Tape can be purchased at <http://www.alternativeradio.org/>

<sup>2</sup>Squeezed to death – about the embargo and the children of Iraq

<http://pilger.carlton.com/page.asp?partid=170>

<sup>3</sup>Osama [Bin Laden interview](#) in 1977 with Peter Arnett

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Interview with Jesus

February 23, 2004



**B**elow is Mark Goldman's fantasy interview with Jesus after Jesus attends a showing of Mel Gibson's *"The Passion of the Christ."*

*Mark:* My goodness, well I do appreciate your taking the time to do this interview. I imagine a lot of people will be interested in what you have to say, and if I may say so, it is a real honor to meet you.

*Jesus:* No problem. I'm glad to do this. In fact, I appreciate the opportunity.

*Mark:* You know, it's kind of strange. You don't sound like I thought you would. I mean you speak excellent English and you don't even have an accent. Can you explain why you sound like... well... I mean, like anyone else... that is to say, in your manner of speech?

*Jesus:* Well, you know, I haven't been entirely idle since I left this plane. I've learned a few things and have had time to reflect and observe. I want to be understood when I speak and not be too unconventional in my demeanor. You might say I don't want my presentation to get in the way of my message.

*Mark:* Well, ok then. I just think it might be a surprise to some of my readers to hear you expressing this way. I just hope they'll understand and believe this is really you.

*Jesus:* Don't worry. I think they'll understand. I hope so anyway. But then again, I don't think I've ever been very well understood. There are still a lot of lingering misconceptions. But I keep trying. Why don't you just get right into it... I don't mean to rush you, but my schedule is...

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*Mark:* Sure... I'm sorry... you bet. Ok. Well, you just sat through more than 2 hours watching a movie of your life here on Earth. What did you think? What's your first impression?

*Jesus:* Well first of all, let me say that the movie was not a movie about my life. It was about my death. I mean, you need to understand that it was not my intention when I set out on what you might call my journey here on Earth, to make the manner of my death the most important aspect of my life. It sure is true that I did experience a pretty horrible death, (if you want to call it that) to be sure, but I'd hate to think that that was the whole point of my life. So, the movie was not about my life. To tell you the truth it is kind of irksome to me that people so often choose to focus more on that than on the rest.

But on the other hand, I think the movie, while it was not an exact reenactment of what happened, does capture the essence of what it was like for me. It was pretty bad. What happened to me happened to a lot of other people at that time too, you know. It was a pretty common event in those days, I'm sorry to say. Very cruel and barbaric. I'm glad that's not done anymore. You do a lot of other things on this plane, though, that I'd like to see changed but at least you aren't doing that. But did I die because of other people's sins? I would say... I was killed because of ignorance and hate. Unfortunately, those attributes of human expression have not disappeared on this plane. I see plenty of that when I look around, even today. If a closer look at my life can help change that... well, that's all to the good.

*Mark:* Well, what do you think the main point of the movie was, and are you pleased with it?

*Jesus:* I think the point of the movie was that I experienced a very painful and excruciating death with the implication being that somehow my death was perhaps more awful and more significant than others who died the same way. Of course that's not something I agree with. I was tortured and killed because all of a sudden a lot of people

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began listening to what I had to say. And what I had to say was very different from the consciousness of the day. I was a threat to the power structure of both the religious and the political order that was in place then. My death was indeed a horrific injustice, but the injustice done to me was no more significant than similar injustice done to others. What's more painful to me now is not the memory of my death or how I died, but the fact that the meaning of my life has largely been lost and the way a lot of people interpret my death does not please me at all. I imagine I would be a threat to the religious and political order today too if people really wanted to pay attention to what I have to say.

*Mark:* I'm sorry. I don't understand.

*Jesus:* Well let me put it this way. It was never my intention to come onto this plane to be worshipped. That's not my consciousness. That was never my intention. That's not what I'm about. It does not please me to be called God and to be worshipped. My main message is very simple. What I wanted to say in my life is simply this: love one another. Which is to say, honor one another, tell the truth, seek justice, have courage. How hard is that to understand. Anyone who wants to honor me, or my life, can do so by simply living their life with that same intention. But somehow things got turned around. And that, I have to say... is something I still find very painful.

*Mark:* Well don't you think people know that? Isn't that why they go to church? Don't they go to pray for guidance in how to do just that? I mean... isn't the purpose of religion to gain greater understanding in how we can all love one another?

*Jesus:* Some people do. What concerns me is that so many go to worship, hoping that worshipping me, worshipping God, will somehow save them from something, or get them something they want. If worship made people more responsible, that would be ok. But it doesn't always work that way. I think loving someone who has dedicated his life to humanity, which is what I did, is a wonderful thing, but I did not dedicate my life to humanity in hopes of being

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worshipped... or rather I should say, I would hope that in loving me and in being loved by me, people would use that experience to help them understand how to love others. You see, loving me is not that hard. But I want you to love one another. That's not so easy. I know that. It never has been. But I still hope for it. The way I know I am really loved is when people who listen to what I said, take it to heart and try to follow my example. I hope my love comforts you, but I also hope that it inspires you to have courage in seeking justice and goodwill towards all people.

*Mark:* Well that's not so easy. I mean most people have difficulty loving others all the time. I know I don't always feel loving towards others.

*Jesus:* The problem is that people think that love is a feeling that they should always feel. When they don't feel that way they think they don't love. But to love other people does not mean that you have to feel any particular way all the time. To love other people has more to do with your commitment to the things you say you believe in. For example, in this country you can express your love for one another by simply being true to your ideals. Treat all people with respect, be a good citizen, try to help one another by supporting legislation that is compassionate and fair, for example. It has nothing to do with religion. It has to do with simply making decisions that are consistent with your values moment to moment. And on a more personal note you can do the same thing... in your own home, in your school, in your job. Treat people you know with as much compassion and understanding as you can... and treat those you know and those you don't know the same. Look, everyone makes mistakes. If you can treat people fairly, particularly when they screw up, that is love, too. I never asked anyone to do the impossible. By making me into someone to be worshipped, I'm sorry to say... is really to reject my message. It isn't an act of love, if you see what I mean.

*Mark:* Well, to tell you the truth, I'm not sure that I do. Can you give me an example or be more specific.

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*Jesus:* Well listen Mark, the point is this: when you say that only I have the ability to love unconditionally and that you do not, you are already giving yourself an excuse to not follow my example. And besides, it just isn't true. I lived on this plane just like you do. I was not capable of anything that others could not do or be. I wasn't asking you to be more than you could be. I was asking you to be what you could be. But most people didn't believe me, didn't trust me, weren't willing to change, didn't have the courage to—not even my own followers. If they had believed in me and trusted me, they would have become what I was, which I told them they could do. A few understood but most did not. By choosing to worship me, by setting up a church in my name, they eventually ended up playing politics. They wanted to influence others not by being an example, which is very hard to do, but they took the easy road... by setting up rules and levels of authority... by inventing frightening images of how people would be punished if they didn't obey this authority or that rule. That was not my example. They found it too hard to simply love one another like I tried to do and instead made me into much more than even a hero... they lifted my image up so high that no one could hope to be what I was. For many, all they understood was that they were supposed to worship me, pray to me, treat me like an idol. But that was a distortion of my message. I am not interested in being worshipped. I am interested in being loved. You demonstrate that you love me, by trusting me, by believing me... by doing what you can to love one another. If that's what you are doing, then what I went through was worth it.

*Mark:* I think I understand. So do you think people should go see the movie?

*Jesus:* Sure. Why not? As long as they realize that what they are looking at is the pain of injustice that I experienced, that others experience, when injustice is allowed to flourish. Maybe the movie will help them better understand compassion... not only for what I went through, but for what so many go through even today. I cannot



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explain to you the pain of being nailed onto a cross. But then again I cannot explain to you the pain and suffering that so many of your fellow human beings experience every day because of injustice that is still allowed to flourish.

*Mark:* Well there seems to be some controversy about who was responsible for your death, for that injustice. Do you want to comment on that?

*Jesus:* No one living today is responsible for what happened to me. You do not come into this world guilty for what your near or distant relatives believed or might have done. There is hardly anyone living today who does not have ancestors who at one time or another were brutal and barbaric in how they treated others. But you are not guilty because of what they did. God is not like that. And yet, at the same time, all are responsible for the great amount of suffering that exists in the world today. Because responsibility does not mean that you are guilty for all of this suffering. It means simply that who you are and how you live makes a difference. Who you are and how you live can help heal the suffering or add to it. The difference you make has to do with how willing you are to love ... even when you don't feel like it.

I'm sorry I have to go now. But I have a message for you and your readers: If you ever think you have forgotten or never knew how to love... or if you ever feel so lost and alone that it is you who is suffering, I want you to remember this: this God that is within me, is within you too, He is within everyone. Remember?... closer than your own breath. I love you. Wherever you go, my love goes with you. Take that love and make it your own. Become someone who loves.

*Mark:* Thank you. I'll try. I love you, too.

*Jesus:* I know. You're welcome.

## The Critical Choice

### On My Resignation From the Green Party November 20, 2003



----- Original Message -----

From: Mark A. Goldman

To: Recipient list suppressed

Sent: Thursday, November 20, 2003 9:34 AM

Subject: My resignation

Dear Friends,

I am giving notice today that I am resigning from my affiliation with the Green Party. The reason is simply this: I have already said pretty much everything I need to say, but I will add this one last statement:

No program of nation building, early withdrawal, or democratization in Iraq will work unless the United States redefines its foreign policy objectives worldwide. There is only one plan that I believe can work to bring stability to the region and also to begin to heal the festering sores that describe the relationships between so many nations and sub-cultures that populate the planet. You will know my plan has been adopted when you hear the President of the United States and Congress make the following joint announcement, assuming they really mean it:

"It is the policy of the United States to devote itself to the full realization and implementation of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) worldwide. We will now begin to bring ourselves into full alignment with this objective."

This, of course, would mean that the United States would have to alter the various aspects of its domestic agenda and have in place a program of education designed to transform the consciousness of the American public and bring it into alignment with this national goal and commitment.

Currently, the plan I propose is so much outside the observable consciousness of the planet's inhabitants that I believe there is little hope that we will see such an undertaking anytime soon. Who could lead such an effort, I do not know. But when you are ready to accomplish this, and find yourself totally aligned with the effort, you will one day notice that you are not alone.

Mark

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*Response At 11:30 AM 11/20/2003 -0800*

*Dear Mark,*

*Not to be difficult, but it seems to me what you are proposing is what the Green Party is all about. So why do you want to resign from a party that agrees with you? Just curious.*

*Richard*

Answer to response (*which I revised on 1/19/04*)

Dear Richard,

There is a difference between listing an objective as a value on a piece of paper and actually understanding what the significance of that value is and working to achieve it. When the Green Party communicates to the American People— as its central theme— that the Universal Declaration of Human rights is the main standard by which it intends to measure whether or not any given U.S. policy or activity is legitimate, then I will join again.

Every citizen needs to read and understand the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and decide to come into alignment with it. Every citizen needs to test his or her ideas about how we should behave as individuals and as a nation, against the Declaration to make sure he or she is in alignment with it, and each citizen needs to communicate to those who would set policy, that no policy will be acceptable if it is not aligned with the Declaration in principle and in substance. And when we advocate for any policy, we need to show how it will advance us towards the goal. Indeed, this should be the central theme of our national dialog. If we were doing that we could each work on our own interests and yet if we were working within that context, everything and anything we did would strengthen our core values, i.e., every solution must advance and come into alignment with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is not enough to simply say, "...because I am Green I am doing this." To do this you have to hold it in your mind and value it in your heart and make it your intention every time you consider what you are up to and every time you open your mouth. In any event, this is where I think we need to go and what I will be looking for in any candidate who wants my vote.

Mark

# The Critical Choice

## Local Issue

Revised: November 12, 2003



Letter to those who can do something about it.

*(Submission to 'letters to the editor' of local paper)*

I just learned that the Washington State Ferry System is planning to cut back service to Vashon Island on weekends starting in late December. I imagine you will be hearing from those who will be adversely affected, like me for example. I will be greatly inconvenienced by this. But in all honesty I must tell you... I am somewhat amused too. What amuses me is that most folks will never connect this attack on the standard of living of local residents with the economic and social agenda of the Bush administration, although there's no question in my mind that the link is direct and clear. Most folks I know will consider this to be a local issue. Everyone will blame local legislators for their incompetence and if these legislators happen to belong to the opposition party, well, that's all to the good. This will make a good issue for the next local election. And no doubt, until then, it will be in our local papers ad nauseam.

When Clinton left office, we had, if I'm not mistaken, the highest surplus that this country had ever known. Those funds might have been earmarked for better schools and better paid teachers, improved transportation systems, universal health care, prescription drugs for the elderly, etc. And of course, had the money been spent on those things, it would have been a shot in the arm to our economy and made us all a little better off. Instead we raided the people's treasury, essentially taking from the poor to give to the rich, crushing the hopes and dreams of those who really needed a lift, and disappointing those of us who had hopes for a better, stronger, more compassionate, more enlightened America. Now just about every state in the union is flat broke, and we're all a little confused.

The Bush administration came to power illegally through fraud and deceit. Since then, it has systematically undermined some of our most fundamental freedoms, started an illegal war, passed or attempted to pass inane legislation wherever it could, and took us from

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the highest surpluses we have ever known, to the highest deficits in history. Lucky for them they had 9/11 on which to blame their sorry performance. Of course they're a resourceful group and they are managing to use the tragedy to their best economic advantage, so there's no need to feel sorry for them.

What amuses me most, I think, is that in my experience, a lot of Americans are not easily moved to defend against even grave injustices when they affect others, although we do get very upset when we perceive ourselves as being personally hurt by them. This attitude and world view, is understandable and, of course, can only lead to tyranny, war, and pestilence if it continues, but who would have the gall to say such a thing. People who have not had time to write letters to defend the basic rights of others, or to stand up to defend the Constitution, will now find the time to write letters to you about the ferry service. Well I think that's a good start.

For the most part, I think being upset will be good practice for all of us. We are finally being affected in a very tangible way for our own negligence and stupidity. As we sit in the ferry lines it will give us something to think about and it will teach us patience. Whether we can think this through and arrive at a responsible solution remains to be seen. But this is a good beginning and we should get used to it, because I think there's more on the way.

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### Free Speech

Revised: November 9, 2003



**T**he same day I heard Bush's excellent speech before the National Endowment for Democracy, where he spoke about expanding freedom and Democracy in the world, I read the following article by Charles Levendosky, which was published by the International Herald Tribune and reprinted at <http://www.commondreams.org/views03/1106-11.htm>

It details how Bush now prevents protestors from being seen or heard wherever he decides to go. Evidently, members of the Secret Service and other law enforcement agencies now require that protestors who are visible or within earshot of the President must remove themselves to what is euphemistically referred to as a "free speech zone." A "free speech zone" is a designated area, (usually a mile or so from the President), where those who hold signs in opposition to the President must stand. Those who support the administration are allowed to stand pretty much anywhere they please. Apparently, free speech in a public place is now only guaranteed to some Americans. For others, speech is not so free and not so public.

If we allow this policy to persist, we will have lost the First Amendment. Those who would destroy our heritage are hoping that if they take our freedoms away inch by inch rather than all at once, we will not protest—that we will not be so insulted that it will reach a threshold where we will not be willing to take it anymore. They believe we will never have the courage to stop what we are doing to take responsibility for this treason... and turn it around. I, for one, think this administration has gone too far.

We were taught, and we have been teaching our children, that certain rights and freedoms are guaranteed to us under the Constitution. We now find they are not guaranteed at all.

And who is and always was the guarantor of those freedoms? If you think it was a piece of paper called the Constitution, or the President of the United States, or Congress — I say, it never was. It is and always was just you... and me. It is your courage and your love of

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freedom that protects me, and it is my courage and my love of freedom that protects you. Our forefathers laid down their lives so that we would have these rights and freedoms. Now their sacrifice is being defiled.

What makes our Constitution so precious is that the rights and freedoms enumerated therein forwards the cause of justice. If you believe in justice then you will not treat others or allow your government to treat others in a manner that is inconsistent with the principles you believe in. You cannot deny justice to some and then expect that justice will be preserved for you.

So I say to you now... through our negligence, some of our rights and freedoms have now been lost... and we, and our children, will not have them again until we are willing to take them back. And I don't believe we will get them back now without great commitment, intelligence, sensitivity, and real sacrifice. When we try to reverse this policy, they will resist. If we complain, they will say we are supporting terrorists and will try even harder to silence us. If we attempt to use force, they may even call us terrorists and try to take away even more of our rights. And if we do nothing, they will pass new legislation that will intrude on more of our freedoms and they will pass new economic measures that will effectively cut social services, public education, and other amenities that will further reduce our standard of living in favor of the already economic elite.

Our right to speak out and be heard is fundamental to protecting all of our other rights and freedoms. And the longer we wait to win back what we've lost, the harder the fight and the higher our sacrifice will be.

I say, stop what you are doing. Get this policy reversed. Or be prepared to lose something sacred and precious... maybe it will be your life or the life of someone you love, maybe it will be your joy, or maybe it will be your country.

Now is the time for all good citizens to come to the aid of their country.

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On Good Economic News  
November 2, 2003



**T**his past week we heard reports that in the last quarter, the economy expanded at its fastest pace since 1984. This is good news. Nevertheless, it would be a great disservice if students of our political economy did not put this news into perspective. Unfortunately, I see no meaningful critical analysis taking place in the mainstream media. So I offer these comments:

Economic indicators such as GDP can be useful for describing economic activity. But economic indicators typically do not provide much insight into the nature of real wealth or the well being of average citizens. There never was any question that recent tax cuts would stimulate the economy. But there was also never any question as to who would really benefit from this stimulation and who would pay for it.

So where is the growth coming from? Military spending is up, as is funding for security of all types and sizes. Low interest rates have made the construction and housing industry look good while increases in consumer spending in the last quarter is a legitimate bright spot. The stock market is also up.

But if you have been paying attention, you know that virtually every state in the union is facing huge budget deficits. The country has been mortgaged to its eyeballs—a mortgage on which our children will spend their lives making payments. School budgets have been decimated, class size has increased, innovative programs have been curtailed, teachers have been let go. School lunch programs for poor kids have been eliminated in many districts all across the country. Money for social services, particularly for the elderly, has been slashed. Media mergers continue, further reducing our access to good information, and limiting competition. Environmental protections have been gutted wherever possible, civil liberties have been undermined, corporate greed is rewarded as if it were a religion. Job security is low, unemployment is high, overtime without overtime pay appears to be the centerpiece of the new human resource model.



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Health care is going through the roof, even while benefits are being reduced, and employers are passing these costs on to you in the form of higher premiums and co-pays. These added costs show up as new growth in the economic indicators even though they lower our standard of living.

What's happening? Money once spent on educating our children is now spent on such things as making war, illusionary nation building, ruining the environment, and funding airport security. This spending is reported as growth even though it means our children will end up being less well educated, less inspired, and more likely to take a job that will pay them for doing work that produces no real wealth, as in say, the folks who design and build weapons, or those who look for bombs in your shoes before you get to board your plane.

Do we need these weapons, this security? Maybe, but only because our government has consistently bungled its job of promoting human rights, freedom, and democracy in the world, failing most dramatically since the last presidential election.

Terrorism in the final analysis is usually nothing more than "blowback" — what you eventually get back if you pursue self-serving bankrupt policies without honor. If you look closely you will see that since the current administration took office, the standard of living has declined for most Americans although few Americans will ever realize that this is a direct result of narrow, unenlightened thinking, infidelity to our highest ideals, lies, distortions, and just plain incompetence on the part of our highest ranking elected officials... and those who put them in office... us.

## The Critical Choice

On Billions for Iraq  
October 10, 2003



I was never for the war in Iraq and I never thought George Bush would make an acceptable President. I haven't changed my mind about that. It was the Bush administration that wanted to go to war but it was the American people—you and I—that allowed it to happen.

In the 10 years prior to war, U.S. sanctions, endorsed by the United Nations, were directly or indirectly responsible for the deaths of over 500,000 Iraqi children. In my opinion, that was a primary motivation for the Bin Laden attack on the World Trade Center. During those 10 years, American bombs wiped out a good portion of the Iraqi economic and social infrastructure. Children starved, got dysentery and cholera, did without medicine and clean water, got cancer from depleted uranium that we spewed all over the place, lost hope for the future.

Now George Bush wants over \$80 Billion to bring Iraq back into the world community. I do not trust this administration to honorably administer \$80 Billion and taking that much money out of our economy will cause great hardship to many Americans.

Nevertheless, I believe that it is our moral duty to do what we can to make reparations for what we did there and I imagine \$80 Billion will not be enough. I believe Congress ought to approve the funding Bush is asking for and I believe we then ought to vote those bastards—who lied and cheated their way into office—out of office.

I think a better day is coming. We humans are learning something from our experience and one day we will allow that experience to transform the way we behave towards people we don't know. Like you, I hope it's sooner rather than later.

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### What Do You Stand For?

Revised: July 4, 2003



I believe that one reason we, who stand in opposition to the current regime, have not been more effective, is that we do not identify ourselves with a common set of values that could unite us and allow us to speak with one voice. Every organization and every interest group that has a legitimate beef with the current administration has a vision for a better world... and yet every organization is pursuing its own agenda, thinking that that's all we need to do to win the day. Perhaps it is. Still, I can't help but think that our success would come quicker if, as a political force, we were not so fractured and divided.

I believe what is needed is a common set of values to which every individual and every organization could align, such that if we did align with those values it would support each of us in our own cause, and at the same time, support the cause of everyone else who is looking for positive change.

I'm asking you to consider carefully what I've written here, because I believe what I am about to suggest can only strengthen your current strategy whatever that strategy might be.

My thesis is based on the premise that there is, in fact, a set of values to which all of us can align, and if we would align with these values I believe it would transform the political landscape as we know it and it would set the world on a different path.

I am referring to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is the only statement of which I am aware that has already been acknowledged by the family of nations, which is to say, by the entire world community, when it was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, as the one common standard that sets forth the basic rights and freedoms that each member of the human family needs to have—and the rights and freedoms each government must strive to deliver—in order for that government to be considered a legitimate government of people.

If you read the Declaration, you will see that it supports the goals and aspirations of every worthwhile organization you or I can think of.

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If each individual and each organization would, in turn, acknowledge the Declaration as the standard by which every government and its policies will be judged, not only would that individual or that organization's purposes be forwarded, but the goals of all progressive organizations would be supported as well. But we ALL need to support ALL of the articles of the Declaration.

This administration and other administrations over time have denigrated the United Nations and undermined its work. I believe one reason they have done so is because the corporate elite of this country are afraid of the power that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights represents—the power of The People.

Corporations are in business to make money and they do that by exercising as much control as they can over their resources, their markets, and the political environment in which they operate. Corporations are not democratic institutions, nor are their objectives necessarily in tune with the greater common good... at least not unless they are forced to become aligned to the greater good through appropriate oversight administered by legitimate political institutions committed to the enforcement of enlightened legislation.

The Declaration represents the universal hope of the common people. It has the power to fulfill that hope if we will only honor it, each in our own heart and ground of being. Whatever goal you might want to achieve... that goal should come into alignment and conform to this standard, if your solution is to stand the test of time. Unfortunately, even though we have this standard available to us, we are not currently using it as an authority that validates our work. If we did, we would prevail.

With respect to many of Earth's most pressing issues—the situation in the Middle East being one example—the UDHR could help create the context for their resolution in a number of ways:

No government involved (not the U.S., the Palestinians, the Israelis, nor any other government) can guarantee that its policies will be adhered to by succeeding administrations. The UDHR offers an overall context to which all governments and succeeding administrations can be held accountable by the world community, if

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the world community would only stand by what it says. It could provide continuity, which we do not now have.

In the United States it is our Constitution that is the standard or context to which each new piece of legislation and each administration is expected to adhere, even though the nature and character of each new administration is different from the last. On the world stage, it is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that could and should be the standard to which each government should be required to adhere in order to fulfill its commitment to its people, its neighbors, and the world at large. In addition, standing up for the UDHR would also strengthen the Constitution, because most of the rights enumerated in the U.S. Constitution are extended to all peoples in the Declaration. Whenever you would defend the Declaration, you would also be defending the U.S. Constitution.

The UDHR would be strengthened and reinvigorated if all parties concerned would acknowledge it as the standard by which success is to be measured. If the final result of any solution does not attain the security, the rights, and the freedoms promised by the UDHR for all parties concerned, then I do not believe it should be said that a legitimate solution was reached.

Acknowledging the UDHR as the standard of achievement to which all solutions must be aligned, would likewise reinvigorate the United Nations and give it the authority it needs to take on its role as intermediary when called upon to do so.

It is a failure of this government and other governments as well that those in power have not required our children to learn about the UDHR by making it a central theme in our educational system, nor have we incorporated it into the fabric of our culture, even though we promised we would do so when it was set in motion in 1948. I believe the reason we haven't done so is because those in power recognize that if the common people were properly informed about what their rights truly are, The People would no longer tolerate the exercise of illegitimate power that often preys upon our society and others.

A great many people no longer trust the United States (or this administration) to broker a fair solution, or to exercise its power for the good of all, no matter what the problem is. Acknowledging the

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existence of, and giving power to, a higher authority—the UDHR—would help to mitigate this fear. Note that I am not saying that the United Nations is the higher power, although maybe one day it could be. What I am saying is that the UDHR, as an expression of the common people, is the higher power. We must reclaim that power and make it real.

"Separate but equal," as we have found with respect to race relations in the United States, can never really be equal. Yet, problems are often brokered with this mindset at work. No nation ought to have approval of the world community if its underlying structure is based on religion or ethnicity. Every nation must provide its citizens with certain basic rights and freedoms, which it cannot do, for example, if it identifies itself as a Jewish nation, a Christian nation, or a Muslim nation. Using the UDHR as the standard to which all solutions must conform would help us avoid illegitimate outcomes.

Neither the Bible, nor the Koran, nor the Torah can serve as the Universal standard in the same way that the UDHR can. While all peoples need to be free to practice whatever religion they choose, no nation ought to be formed on the basis of religion nor should any nation, including our own, be considered acceptable to the world community if it does not strive to adhere to the rights and freedoms enumerated in the UDHR.

Religious forces in the world, however well intentioned, often set out to enforce rules of conduct prescribing for other people how those people ought to live, rather than simply proclaiming for all people the full measure of the inalienable rights and freedoms that all people have a right to enjoy. Religion is a mockery if it is not followed out of choice by free human beings exercising their own free will. Religion that is practiced as tyranny is simply tyranny operating under another name.

Without the pain and suffering of the Second World War and the cry for justice and peace that followed, there would be no Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We must hope not to have to suffer such calamity again in order to get in touch with our humanity and our universal hope for peace. We must not forget why and how the UDHR came into being. And we must never allow it to fall into disuse or

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forget the hope it represents... nor fail to acknowledge its power... for it is the power of the common people that brought it into being, and it is the power of the common people that it proclaims.

Those who now exercise power to oppress or disenfranchise others are not going to give up that power without a fight. That's not news. Freedom has never been free; peace is hard won. So what I am suggesting is not a "cake-walk" into town.

But no single individual on the world stage, nor any single organization, nor any government has the moral authority to broker the kinds of solutions we need. And yet WE would have the moral authority we need if WE would acknowledge the UDHR as the authority we represent. It would be foolish indeed, in my view, to try to "reinvent the wheel" now. We already gave birth to this Declaration... doing so with great labor. Now we need to remember who we are and what we did. We need now to incorporate The Declaration of Human Rights into our consciousness, into our lives, and into our solutions. If we all would only strive to fulfill the promise WE already made—to ourselves, and to the rest of humanity—we will find what we are looking for. All we need is the courage... the courage to reclaim what is already ours... what we've already proclaimed and won.

I call upon you to read and understand the Declaration. Then defend it. State your intention to do so and then broadcast that intention to the far corners of this nation and to the world until everyone understands why this is our best hope. It is our best hope because the most difficult part of the battle has already been won. Now we must join forces to solidify the victory. You don't need to mention where you heard this idea, if this is where you are first hearing it. This is not my idea. It is the idea of those who brought the Declaration into being in the first place. Their work and sacrifice is far greater than anything I have done or am likely to do. What I am saying is not new. This is just a reminder to honor the promise YOU already made.

Do not align with any candidate, any political party, or any organization—indeed, do not align yourself with any organ of society if that organ of society is unwilling to recognize the legitimacy and urgency of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And don't

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continue to support any organ of society that makes a promise to support the Declaration and then doesn't follow through... and this includes any church or synagogue, any service club, any college or university, any charity, or even your government. If your government—which is to say, those in power—will not align with the Declaration, then your government needs to be changed.

The Declaration is the common value of The Common People. Those who would argue against it, would argue against you and your freedom. To be effective you don't need to worry if other people agree with you. You only need to have the strength and courage of your own convictions and then stand up for those convictions and speak your truth. Eventually, others will come around. And you don't have to give up talking about your favorite issue. All you need to do is acknowledge that your issue supports and is in alignment with the Declaration just as the Declaration supports and is in alignment with your issue. If one does not support the other, then get another issue.

As you do this you will begin to educate everyone about the UDHR and why it's important, and when they become educated, they will come into alignment with it... because it is the hope and dream of the common people already expressed that you are fighting for.

Give it Power, endow it with authority, and it will give The Power back to YOU.

*The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is reprinted  
in this book following the commentaries.*



## The Critical Choice

Needs a Tune

May 22, 2003



**E**ven a Rolls-Royce will eventually break down and stop running if you don't keep it maintained. If your mechanic tells you your Rolls has a broken cylinder head, you don't look at him with indignant disgust and say, "Hey, this car is the finest car on the road. I don't need you showing any disrespect for my car." If you have any sense, you will take a hard swallow and ask him what it's going to take to get it fixed.

Well, I hate to be the one to tell you this, but your country needs a new head gasket. And there are a few spark plugs that need to be replaced too.

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### On Stopping Abortion

May 18, 2003



Some people actually believe that God has no moral compass. These are the folks who think that God would have women carry an unborn child in their bodies and then give a bunch of stupid white men veto power over what happens to it. I don't think so. I think God has a covenant with women to the effect that if a woman is to carry a child in her womb, then that woman shall be the sole guardian of that child, with the authority, sanctioned by God, to make any and all decisions with respect to it, including whether or not it will live or die — at least until it is alive and well outside the womb. What happens to that child is between the mother and God and anyone who would attempt to break such a covenant or attempt to stand between a woman and her God certainly ought to have no standing in any court of law.

People who name themselves as protectors over the lives of other people's unborn children are typically the same folks who on a regular basis push for legislation that undermines a child's right to free and competent medical care and other social services paid for by society as a whole. These are the folks who insure that some children get access to a good education while others do not. These are the folks who have allowed twenty percent of American children to live below the poverty line without lifting a finger to help them. Do you really think this is God's plan? It amazes me that so many people can be that callous and obtuse and still manage to occupy center stage in America's political arena.

Even now we have before us proposals to give ridiculous tax cuts that are designed to benefit the richest Americans at a time when state budgets have been decimated and social services of every kind are being cut back. Who would make such proposals? Not the kind of people you would want to be guardians of the public trust... not the kind of people you would entrust with the care of blessed children.

No one thinks for a minute that abortion is a good thing or that it ought to be encouraged. Abortion should be discouraged. But the way

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to discourage it is by making it unnecessary. How do you do that? But insuring that any mother who finds herself in difficult straits, has enough support from the community that she doesn't have to carry the burden alone. No mother or child ought to be allowed to go hungry. No mother or child ought to be allowed to be homeless. No child ought to attend a school that is incapable of giving that child the very best possible education that money can buy. No mother or child ought to be denied good health care. If mothers knew that society as a whole would stand with them in making sure that their child would not suffer unnecessarily because of their station in life, there would be very few abortions. Anyone who cares enough to want to save unborn children from termination ought to step up to the plate and take real responsibility for insuring that we don't live in a world where any woman is likely to make a decision to terminate her pregnancy when given a free choice.

If you want to live your life in the image of God, then do not tell a woman that she must give birth to a child and then when that child is born, turn your back on both the mother and the child and think you have done your duty. God is not like that. No mother wants to lose a child. But no mother wants to bring a life into the world and then have it suffer either. If you want life to flourish, then give life hope. Better you should get your moral guidance someplace else than from where you're now getting it. Get to work, have some compassion, and make a real contribution instead of trying to defend principles you don't even understand.

*When I published the above opinion piece someone wrote to me pointing out that my attitude was a bit angry or arrogant, as evidenced by my 'stupid white men' comment, and perhaps what I said in the last paragraph. That in fact, there are arguments on the other side that are made by sincere individuals who believe their arguments are valid and held for an honorable purpose, including the point that society has an interest in protecting the fetus. I agree and now would like to add the following:*

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I did not argue above that society has no interest in protecting the fetus. In fact, I think it does have an interest and also a responsibility. What I said, or at least tried to say, was that society can demonstrate its interest in protecting the fetus by making sure that the mother has whatever resources she needs to conclude, that if she were to bring a child into the world, that it will have the best chance possible of succeeding in life. That would allow the mother the freedom of making the wisest choices possible about her pregnancy, given that it is her choice to make. The advantage of my argument over others that I have heard is that my argument recognizes the mother's right to her own life along with the rights and responsibilities that come with being a woman in a free and civilized society.

So in a manner of speaking, I believe at conception, the child puts its life into her hands and accepts her guardianship and her judgment as final. The fetus says in effect, "I'll take a chance on you." and does so willingly and without a guarantee, trusting that if now is not the time, then so be it... maybe later when the time is right. I also believe that this is an agreement that God would say is fair and even.

The mother is putting herself at risk, both in economic and physical terms, and embarks on a sacred journey, taking on a responsibility that will likely impact her and her offspring the rest of their lives. After birth there is no turning back, but until then, it is her right to abort the journey if she determines that to be the proper course of action.

After birth, the situation becomes a bit more complicated. The mother is still its guardian, but having advanced to this stage in life where it is emancipated from the womb, the child acquires some additional rights, including the right to take its place in society in search of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'

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Bush's Dividend Tax Cut  
Revised May 17, 2003



**H**ere's what I suspect will be the result of Bush's dividend tax cut. I haven't read the fine print to this bill, which is not yet out of committee, so all I have at this point is an educated suspicion.

But if I were you I would ask a tax expert before letting your congressperson sign this bill because if you don't, you might find yourself out of a job. Bush calls it a "Jobs" bill... I think it might be a formula for continued recession or worse. Here's why:

There are countless billions (trillions actually) locked up inside private corporations. These dollars are the fuel that our economy runs on. Why do I say "locked-up?" Because the owners of these businesses would like to get their hands on this money by selling a bunch of their stock back to the company for cash. If they are the sole owner, and could do this, they would own 100% of the outstanding stock before the transaction, and 100% after the transaction. Not a bad deal. But they don't do that, because under current rules the proceeds from that kind of stock redemption is treated as a dividend. So what, you say? Well a dividend is currently taxed at ordinary income tax rates. So if wealthy business owners tried to do what I just described, they would have to pay a lot of tax to get at this money, which they don't want to do. Under today's rules it wouldn't be any more attractive than taking an increase in salary. (Which is what it actually is.)

So why not get Congress to tax dividends at the same rate they tax capital gains, or better yet, not have it taxed at all. Great idea. Now Mr. Tycoon can strip his company of any cash in its coffers and he's out scott free... and he still owns the company to boot. Great plan. For him. But what is left behind for the employees is a shell that's sort of dead in the water. If this happens, what are companies going to use to fuel an economic recovery? Mr. Business owner is not going to use his wealth to buy new plant and equipment. These are the baby boomers who are looking to retire—the wealthiest class of entrepreneurs the planet has ever known. If the new code allows this to happen, you might very well see the economy barely limp along for a long, long time, but interestingly enough, you'll never know why. Well, that

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depends on whether you're an owner lying in the sun in Barbados or an employee hoping for a raise that will never come. One wonders perhaps if Bush Sr. might be getting ready to sell some of his Carlyle stock.

Whatever the fallout might be, it is clear that this will concentrate even more dollars in the hands of a wealthy few and this cannot be good for our democracy. I don't know if this is a one step or two step plan. But I think this is where we're headed, and if I'm right... it could be the biggest rip-off of the American people since the Supreme Court paved the way for corporations to be treated better than humans.

Now you might ask, why shouldn't an owner of a private corporation be able to take money out of his business if he has worked his whole life to build it into something. The reason is this: when a business owner incorporates a business, the state offers that owner certain protections and advantages in exchange for a willingness to treat that business as a separate entity which has as its purpose, to engage in commerce not only for the good of the owner and the employees, but also for the good of society as a whole. There is an implicit agreement between the state and the owner to conduct that business in accordance with accepted principles of accounting and commerce but also to conduct it in alignment with the general goals and aspirations of the community in which it operates.

If the stockholder is a director, he has a fiduciary responsibility to the company and it's future success. He's there to serve the company. The company is not there to serve him. If he wants out, he should sell his stock on the open market, to his employees, or even to his children and let them take over... as long as the transaction is fair and not self-serving. He should have no right to use his position to enrich himself at the expense of others, whether it be the employees who would be left behind, or the community at large. And the tax code ought to reflect this reality, as it now does, although it is not common to talk about it the way I just have.

I say, Bush's tax proposal will further undermine the very spirit of responsible stewardship which we so desperately need to protect the fabric of our society.

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Special Note: If you are going to do a critical analysis of this, please use the expertise of a tax attorney who also knows something about economics. My guess is, the dynamics of what I am talking about will fly under the radar of most economists because economists are not generally fluent when it comes to understanding the tax code, (although once they understand the dynamics, an economist ought to be able to speculate on what the long term fallout might be,) but a top flight tax attorney will know exactly what I'm talking about and should be able to speculate on whether or not what I'm talking about is likely to be important to business owners, their employees, and you.

Of course the tax cut proposed might also be called the full employment act for tax attorneys, financial advisors, and others, or, if not that, the best secret political fund raising scheme this country has ever known. There are a lot of folks who want this—and now you can see why—but it is fools gold from the point of view of society as a whole.

In any event, the lack of public discussion on this issue, in my view, demonstrates an intention on the part of proponents to secretly mislead the public using slight of hand... and that's surely not good for our democracy or our economy.

Distribute this widely is my suggestion.

## The Critical Choice

My Book  
Revised May 16, 2003



It is said that, “You can’t judge a book by its cover.” That may be true, and yet if you review the cover of my new book, *The Answer*, you will see that the title tells you exactly what’s inside: It’s the answer to the question, “How can we get from here to there.” “There” being the general state of consciousness that would need to exist in America which would have allowed a President of the United States to make the statement that appears on the back cover of my book, instead of the statement this President actually did make following September 11. Actually, it’s kind of a metaphor when you think about it. The journey from ‘here to there’ begins with the journey from the front cover of my book to the back cover — getting there by reading each and every page, in sequence, as they are presented.

Of course anyone who would tout his own book in such a manner risks being labeled “an arrogant son-of-bitch.” The fact is... in our society, *anyone* who would publicly challenge the accepted state of consciousness runs that risk.

Our politicians lie to us on a regular basis while our corporate media embellish and spread the lies. Commerce gives us a steady diet of deceptions designed with scientific precision to trick us into believing, or at least into behaving as if we believe, the most foolish and stupid things imaginable. After all, doesn’t everyone know you will find true happiness and the love of your life in a mug of beer. Our corporations teach us to cheat, our schools teach us not to think, and our religious zealots offer us illusions and call it “The Truth.”

My book doesn’t look like other books. No color, no pictures on the cover, no list of references from famous people. Nothing but a few simple words that make you say to yourself when you see it, “...yeah right.”

Didn't anyone ever tell you, "You can't judge a book by it's cover?"



## The Critical Choice

Better Than This

May 16, 2003



**Y**esterday I sent out an email entitled “Days of Shame.” Every time I send out an email my email list gets smaller and smaller because I honor people’s request to be removed when they ask. One person who demanded to be removed yesterday claimed that I was rude. In case you’re interested let me tell what rude is. Rude is when you claim that you are going to war in order to help people and to free them from their oppression and in the process you blow a child’s leg off. And then you don’t make sure that the child gets proper medical attention. Now that’s RUDE!

Someone else wrote to tell me that they agree with what I was saying, but they had already heard that before. Well how many times do you have to hear something before you will acknowledge that you care by doing something. Doing what? Anything that indicates that you are alive, that you have some compassion, that you are a decent, awake human being.

One state legislator wrote to tell me that she couldn’t help me because she was ONLY a state representative and that I should contact my representatives to Congress. Well, I didn’t ask for her help. I wrote to give her the opportunity to demonstrate her humanity if she was in touch with it. If you’re a state representative then you’re a citizen of these United States. YOU write to YOUR representative.

Do I make you uncomfortable? People keep telling me that I’m bothering them. Are you as bothered as an Iraqi mother is at this moment sitting in a hospital wondering what will become of her child who is now blind.

Get off your f---g ass! Stand up for your country, for your freedom, for your children. People should be asking to be on my mailing list or if not on my list, than on your list if you think you can do better. In any event, we all should be doing **BETTER THAN THIS!!!**

## The Critical Choice

### Days of Shame

Revised: May 16, 2003



I spent last Saturday taking a tour of a birthing center and then went to a ticker tape parade, the purpose of which, was to welcome home our troops who arrived on the USS Lincoln. Lincoln, I think, would have turned over in his grave.

I wouldn't have thought to go to such a thing, but my step-daughter, who is 8 month's pregnant, had never seen a ticker tape parade and wanted to go. It was a mother's day event—the tour and then the parade. So I went along with the rest of the family.

There's nothing wrong with being glad our troops are home and that they got home safe. These young men looked like America's finest with bright smiles, crisp uniforms, and salutes of victory. But they have been betrayed and misled. This was no victory. This was a great American defeat. We won one battle and that is worth some consideration, to be sure. We got rid of a brutal dictator and his brutal regime. For this we can give thanks. We can honestly chalk one up for our side. But when I got home and looked at the news—not the American news—you don't get the news if you limit yourself to the American media. You have to at least go to the BBC if you want to get any semblance of the what's going on. It was the BBC that was reporting how so many hospitals in Iraq were in a state of turmoil and terror. Four shots left of pain killer for the entire hospital. No fluid to sterilize instruments. Children suffering in pain—dying of simple diseases that would hardly cause an American mother to be late for work. And fear that it's getting worse.

My mind flipping back and forth having just come from the most beautiful hospital with pristine rooms and every amenity that a mom, dad, and baby could ever dream of. And then to visions of missing limbs and torn out eye balls, burned off skin, broken bones, intermittent electricity, helpless medical staff, without antibiotics, without pain killers, without clean water. How did this happen? Who did this? Who is responsible for this? Who is in charge here? This is not a victory. This is just one more window into the hidden shame—hidden from Americans, but not hidden from the rest of the world. And

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just wait a few years when we begin to hear about the legacy from the depleted uranium we left behind.

The other day the BBC finally reported a story of how American troops encouraged looting in Baghdad. Got it started when it wasn't happening on its own. Several weeks earlier, there was a similar report from a Swedish journalist who reported the story of how American troops got out of a tank, murdered two Sudanese guards who were protecting a building, then blew open the front door of the building with one blast. Then someone from inside the tank, in Arabic, announced to the locals to come out from hiding and go in to loot the place, the soldiers waving them on. A few minutes later other tanks broke down the entrance to the Justice Department so that looting could begin there. Not news you typically find in an American paper these days. The death and carnage and the atrocities are not meant for American audiences. Unless, that is, if you get up off your ass and look for it. But who wants to do that?

We've now turned the whole idea of patriotism on its ear. We enact legislation to strip away our Bill of Rights and call it Patriot Acts I and II. Our government has learned now that it can do just about anything it wants as long as it does so under the auspices of a good sounding name. "Tax-Relief" is just another word for, "we're going to rob you blind." Evidently, the American people have lost the ability or desire to read and understand small writing. Headlines they can read. Small print becomes a chore. Unless, I suppose, if it's the ball game scores you're looking for. The Bill of Rights. There was a time when we called those who spilled sacred blood, in order that we might have these rights—patriots. Now we take these rights away under the same name. I guess in their memory... and we call it war on terrorism. It's not a war on terrorism. It's just terrorism. Someone will know this terror. And one day it might be you. As long as the President calls it victory it must be so. Duh.

Blind, limbless children... lifetime memories of pain... burned, crushed, blown-apart family members... suffering and disease. Americans came and gave us these. They got rid of Saddam, and gave us this instead. Wave the flag. Heros all. It's a national disgrace and these are days of shame. Defend it if you will. But you can't make reality into a fairy tale by simply turning your back on the truth. Protecting and defending the Iraqi people is and was our responsibility. It was and will be as long as we are there. It is and was

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our duty and responsibility to protect them with even greater fidelity than we protected our own troops. That would have been service with honor and such honor would deserve a hero's welcome. But this is a disgrace and these are days of shame.

## The Critical Choice

### Question

April 28, 2003



I wish someone would ask the administration the following question and then provide the answer to the American public on the evening news:

“What provision of the Constitution and/or what piece of legislation authorizes a President of the United States to form a government of a foreign country and/or to award contracts for the rebuilding of that country's infrastructure using that country's money or any country's money?”

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### Regarding Casualties

April 13, 2003



#### Baghdad Falls to U.S. Troops

given **R**egarding Casualties: I think some credit must be to the Bush team for its willingness to exercise restraint. It could have been worse. Of course if it were your child who lost an arm, a face, or a life in this little war, statistics might not be comforting right now.

The "shock and awe" program that was planned to take place during the first 48 hours of the war as anticipated by the media many weeks ago... never fully materialized. This change in strategy might very well be due to the millions of protestors who expressed their humanity in every major city of the world. It might very well have been them who are the real unsung heroes—who saved more lives than you will ever know. But in the absence of such knowledge, I offer my thanks to Bush. It was his war, and the death toll was less than many expected.

Having said that, I think it's time we seriously turn our attention to what needs to come next: Impeaching Bush and his administration.

How can I be offering praise in one sentence and talking about impeachment in the next? The two issues are unrelated. First of all, I'm not convinced that it was necessary for anyone to have been injured or killed, although I have no regrets that Saddam Hussein has been removed from power. I can't imagine that having him gone is not a good thing. History, though, never quite makes an appropriate accounting of what price was paid to turn a page. For history has a way of discounting the value of the unnumbered, unnamed tide of humanity that regularly gets swept away as the affairs of men move from one epoch to another. Just consider all the indigenous peoples and cultures of the world that once flourished but no longer even exist. People perish, life moves on. And that's how it will be for the thousands who died and are still dying in Iraq.

But did we even win this war? There was never a question as to who would prevail on the battlefield. We just didn't know what the casualties would be. But we did know that the only superpower on the

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planet would defeat the army of a third rate dictator. And although we can celebrate the fact that the Iraqi people are no longer under Saddam Hussein's thumb, we do not yet know what the cost of winning was or will be. After the Gulf War, we eventually began to receive reports of the growing numbers of Iraqi children who were dying of cancer and of newborns with birth defects, all apparently attributable to the depleted uranium we spewed all over the battlefields. Have we now contaminated an entire nation? Can it be cleaned up? Now that the war is over, can anyone say for sure what regions of Iraq are even inhabitable and which are not? What will happen to the cancer rate among Iraqi children now and what about our troops? Will they come home healthy and safe? After the Gulf War many did not. Will the progeny of this army remind Americans for generations of the horrors of war and the price that a nation must pay when its people forget how Democracy is supposed to work?

Today there is chaos in Iraq. We don't know if terrorism has been dealt a blow or been given new life. We don't know if other nations will resort to war instead of diplomacy when new conflicts arise due to our example. And while the media has been focused on the war, this administration has been busy unraveling environmental protections, passing blundering tax measures, growing budget deficits that will surely diminish the real wealth of most Americans in favor of those who already have much more than they will ever need or deserve. You can waive the flag, drink a toast and be glad that there is something to celebrate... but don't be surprised if you wake up in the morning with a hangover. And what's this about impeachment? No one can hide the truth forever. It wants to come out. And it will.



"...they said they were in Puerto Vallarta on September 9 when they learned they would not be able to go home because the US Embassy said: either the storm that is brewing or because we have word that Osama Bin Laden may be hijacking airlines!"

— *Josh Salans*

## The Critical Choice

### On Citizenship



**I**F IT IS THE DUTY of citizens to be willingly drafted into service by their country; and it is the duty of soldiers to face the heat of battle in defense of liberty and justice even at the peril of losing their lives, then it is no less incumbent for each of us who has freely pledged allegiance to the flag of our country, and/or who has taken an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, to do as much, even at the peril of losing our jobs, our standing in the community, our license to practice law, or even a Presidential or Congressional election.

It is because we are each in a distinctive circumstance — due to information that becomes available to us... due to the special trust that the public places in the work that we do... due to expectations that others have, based on how we say we live — namely, that we regularly operate in and for and consistent to the public good — that the public has a right to expect and we each have an obligation to act, in and for the public good, when we have the opportunity to do so, particularly when doing so is aligned with, and appropriate to the work in which we are regularly engaged.

Any United States citizen, who, by his special circumstance of knowledge and position, can benefit his country, (by speaking out or by taking other appropriate measures which are in his general purview or influence, in order to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States), has a duty and an obligation to do so, lest there be citizens who are damaged by his neglect, cowardice, or willful wrong doing.

This country could not have grown and prospered were it not for those who came to this land seeking refuge and hope in the one nation of the world that above all else loves freedom and democracy. Immigrants to the United States, in order to assume the responsibilities of citizenship first must learn about our history and system of government. They then participate in a ceremony in which they voluntarily pledge allegiance to their adopted country. It is in this pledge that each new citizen promises to protect and defend the



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Constitution of the United States against all its enemies, foreign and domestic.

It is unconscionable to think that our founding fathers would have intended, or that we should suppose, that the responsibilities of citizenship in America should be more stringent for those who were not born in this country than for those who were. Therefore, one can only conclude, that every citizen, (be that citizen foreign or native born), has a duty and an obligation to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States with the same zeal as did those who were the founders of this country, or those who fought and died so that we might remain free.

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### How Do You Protect the Constitution of the United States?

August 20, 2001



**Y**OU PROTECT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION of the United States every day by how you live and interact with others and with your environment. You stay informed, you stay conscious, you maintain your dignity and become someone who can be trusted — trusted to deal fairly with others, trusted to tell the truth, trusted to maintain a level of intellectual integrity and compassion that allows you at once to be humble, flexible, steadfast, helpful, and brave. You understand the rights and privileges guaranteed you under the Constitution and you speak up and stand up if and when you see those rights being degraded or denied to others. You do not work simply to make a living; you work to make a contribution, so that civilization, as you know it, advances for everyone in it. You realize that life isn't fair, but that doesn't stop you from trying to make it fair. You do not use what you have... whether it be education, money, or influence to exploit others who have less. Instead, you use your education, your money, and your influence to extend the rights and privileges that you enjoy to those who are denied them. You know that you are not perfect, that you have made mistakes, that you have sometimes failed... but you do not let the fact that your past is flawed or that you have stumbled, invalidate your right to stand up and try again. You are, in short, an honest, decent human being, even if being that way does not make you rich and powerful, and even if it does.



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### Universal Declaration of Human Rights



*As adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, December 10, 1948*

#### *Preamble*

*Whereas*, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

*Whereas*, disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

*Whereas*, it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.

*Whereas*, it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

*Whereas*, the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

*Whereas*, Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

*Whereas*, a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

*Now, therefore, the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.*

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### *Articles*

**ARTICLE 1.** All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

**ARTICLE 2.** Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-selfgoverning or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

**ARTICLE 3.** Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

**ARTICLE 4.** No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

**ARTICLE 5.** No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

**ARTICLE 6.** Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

**ARTICLE 7.** All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

**ARTICLE 8.** Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

**ARTICLE 9.** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

**ARTICLE 10.** Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

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**ARTICLE 11.** (1) Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed.

**ARTICLE 12.** No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

**ARTICLE 13.** (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and return to his country.

**ARTICLE 14.** (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecution genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**ARTICLE 15.** (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

**ARTICLE 16.** (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitations due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

**ARTICLE 17.** (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

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**ARTICLE 18.** Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

**ARTICLE 19.** Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

**ARTICLE 20.** (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

**ARTICLE 21.** (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

**ARTICLE 22.** Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

**ARTICLE 23.** (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

**ARTICLE 24.** Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

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**ARTICLE 25.** (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

**ARTICLE 26.** (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

**ARTICLE 27.** (1) Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

**ARTICLE 28.** Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

**ARTICLE 29.** (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

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(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**ARTICLE 30.** Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

**Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, December 10, 1948.**



*To my wife, my brother, and my mother:  
I couldn't have done this without you.  
I love you very much... thank you.*



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**A**nd if you haven't the courage to tell the truth, or the consciousness to honor the truth, or the love to love the truth, then one day you will not have the truth to tell, and soon thereafter you will not live in a place that will acknowledge the truth when it is told, and not long after that the truth will not be told for it will no longer be allowed. You cannot hope to be a traitor to life, and then expect to live in a free and just society.

Who says so? I say so. Where is it written? In every blade of grass. In the sparrow's song. In a snowflake. In every sunrise and sunset. In every star that lights the sky. In every child's eyes. Every river that flows and every kiss of a lovers lips... says it's so. Because it *IS* so.

And what if you are not a public servant or a member of the media? Every intentional dishonesty diminishes the fabric of life for we are all part of the weave. I do not say this as an invitation to judge others, but rather as a reminder from time to time to look to see if the threads of our own expression are holding life together or allowing it to unravel.

Whoever you are, wherever you are, you are a part of every destiny. Everyone makes a difference, and simply the willingness to hold fast to life, to have faith, compassion and courage is what binds us together and creates the opportunity for us, and our children, and our children's children, to experience the blessings of freedom, happiness, and success.

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