

Remarks of Mayor Ross C. "Rocky" Anderson

Pioneer Park, Salt Lake City

August 22, 2005

We are here today to let the world know that even in the reddest of red states, where George W. Bush enjoyed the greatest margin of victory in both his presidential elections, there is enormous concern about the dangerous, irresponsible, and deceitful public policies being pursued by President Bush and his administration. And we will continue to speak out, with the growing ranks of people in this country finally willing to stand up and say, "We're not going to take it any more."

As more and more people throughout the US now understand, blindly following this President has brought us to disaster. Some of the blind followers have called into question our patriotism – at least they've called into question *my* patriotism – for speaking up today. These are people who are afraid of *what* we have to say, so

they attack us for being unpatriotic, disloyal, or unsupportive of our troops.

What better sign of a healthy, open democracy than people coming together to express their concerns? Those who take a principled stand for better government, who challenge violations of our Constitution, and who stand up against deceit and abuses of power by governmental officials – those are true patriots! You are patriots for being here today.

I spoke at the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention this morning. We are honored to be their host and we are grateful for what they have sacrificed for our country and for our freedoms. As I said during my remarks this morning, those of us who disagree with our political leaders are supportive of our troops and deeply appreciate the sacrifices of our veterans and for the freedoms they have preserved.

Let's demonstrate our deep appreciation for the great veterans who have fought so valiantly for the preservation of our freedoms. And let's show our appreciation for our troops, who put it all on the line every day.

As to those who say we shouldn't be speaking up today, don't they read? Or do they just find it more convenient to ignore the indisputable evidence that our nation was lied into a war? Are they so lulled into apathy and moral somnolence that they prefer just going along to standing up against injustice, violations of fundamental civil and human rights, and a fiscal and environmental recklessness that will have tragic repercussions for many generations to come? If our media's complicity results in such utter complacency on the part of so many in our country, then it's up to us – the people – to keep speaking up.

The good news is that the ranks of the blind followers are dwindling. The poll results, with approval ratings for President Bush ranging from the low 40s to the 20s, demonstrate that people

are listening, learning, and regretting the tragic direction this country has taken under the Bush administration. By the millions, people in this country are deciding that they aren't going to take it any more.

I congratulate those of you who have come to make your voices heard – and urge others to fulfill their moral duty to speak out in protest of what this administration is doing to our dear country.

The Bush Administration and his Republican Congress don't talk a lot about "fiscal conservatism" these days. It should come as no surprise. President Bush came into office with an enormous surplus, and he and his Republican Congress frittered it away – leaving us, and the future, with enormous, historic deficits.

These deficits are the result of huge tax cuts for members of President Bush's ultra-wealthy class, and unbelievably reckless spending, in part to benefit his and Vice-President Cheney's chums like the folks at Halliburton. Let's let the President and Congress

know that, when it comes to enormous tax cuts for the rich while building up devastating national debt, “We’re not going to take it any more!”

I’m a mayor. I love my city, and I want the best for the people of our city. So I’m furious to see our President show such disdain for our cities. While spending hundreds of billions of dollars on our war in Iraq, President Bush seeks to destroy long-time programs that have been of huge benefit to our cities. He has set out to destroy the Community Development Block Grant Program, which has helped lower-income people in our cities for more than 30 years. He has eviscerated Community Oriented Police programs and Local Law Enforcement Grant funding for local communities – harming the security of our home towns while setting up a huge bureaucracy in the name of Homeland Security. Because of the policies of the Bush Administration, 120 fewer families in Salt Lake City will have access to Section 8 affordable housing. Ask them how secure they feel!

On behalf of our cities, on behalf of our police, and on behalf of those who are in need in our community, let's let the President, the Congress, and the nation know, "We're not going to take it any more!"

President Bush, never having to really make it in life on his own, has also shown a remarkable contempt toward working people in this country. Although over two million people in the US earn minimum wage or less, and although today's minimum wage is lower in buying power than the minimum wage in 1955, President Bush refuses to support raising the minimum wage. The outsourcing of millions of jobs during the Bush administration has driven an even greater wedge between the very wealthy – that is, George Bush and Dick Cheney's classmates – and the middle class and poor. With the influence of money in government, we no longer live in a democracy; our nation is a plutocracy – run by the ruling rich. Those of us who believe that government ought to be of the people, by the people, and for the people – and not just run

by and for the benefit of Halliburton and the rest of the very wealthy – we’ve got a message here today: “We’re not going to take it any more!”

Then there’s the going-it-alone Bush Administration, blowing off our long-time allies around the world by choosing a so-called pre-emptive war in Iraq, with a fabricated rationale that is now known to have been a monstrous lie. So, with deaths of US servicemen and servicewomen approaching 2,000, with tens of thousands of Iraqis dead, and many, many thousands of people seriously injured, our President and Congress continue to make more enemies of the US and have made this a far less stable and safe world than before we blundered into Iraq. We stand here today to say, “No more deceit,” “No more unnecessary wars,” “No more nonsense about ‘We did it for the Iraqis.’” If we want to help people in horrific circumstances, why has our country turned a blind eye toward the Darfur region of Sudan, during two years of

genocide? We stand here today to say, “We’re not going to take it any more!”

- The continued refusal to join the rest of the industrialized world in the Kyoto Protocol to combat global warming. “We’re not going to take it any more!”
- The status quo energy policy, to enrich Exxon while ignoring conservation and clean-energy alternatives. “We’re not going to take it any more!”
- The storage of high-level nuclear waste at the Goshute Reservation near Salt Lake City and the transport of nuclear waste through our city to Yucca Mountain. “We’re not going to take it any more!”
- The hostility to equal rights for gays and lesbians. “We’re not going to take it any more!”
- The incursions on our civil liberties in the Patriot Act and the torture of prisoners in violation of Army

regulations and international law. “We’re not going to take it any more!”

There is a growing movement in this great country – and it’s going to lead us back to what we love most about our nation. But for things to change, we all need to stand together, and we need to make it abundantly clear: President Bush and Congress, we’re not going to take it any more!