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BROWN: Anderson has a great view of nation

By David P. Brown

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Former Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson has formed a new political party, the Justice Party, and is running for president.

Anderson was a popular progressive in a very conservative state, which seems like an oxymoron, but it may be a testament to his character and likability.

Anderson opines, "The people are the ones who always bring about major change in this country, and we need to provide that power to people throughout the country. They want to see an alternative party. They recognize that these two militarist, corporatist parties have brought us to this disastrous place to where we are today."

Anderson renounced his affiliation with the Democratic Party in August, saying he was fed up with it along with Congress, the Obama administration and Republicans. He reiterated that disgust during the interview.

"We've been voting as a nation against our own interests year after year," he said. "Most Americans - whether they consider themselves on the right, left, center, whatever - understand that their interests have been undermined by these folks in Washington, both in the White House and in Congress, who are acting as if they're on retainer with their largest campaign contributors rather than doing what's in the public's interest."

Hyperbole you say? Maybe, but I think Anderson is mostly correct. The Republicans are owned by corporate interests and, sadly, that lobbying influence has corrupted too many in my party,

the Democrats, as well.

Anderson is the

executive director of High Road for Human Rights, an issue of paramount concern for me. Forming a viable third party is extremely difficult unless you're independently wealthy, or can raise that kind of money.

Undeterred, Anderson claims there's enough anger and disgust with Washington that it's worth a go.

He says "outrageous, expensive" wars have wasted lives and tax dollars the past decade. The government has driven up the deficit, while cutting taxes for those most capable of paying them. Also, leaders have failed to provide affordable, essential health care for all Americans. The middle class has been decimated."

Exactly.

Hats off to President Obama for keeping his word and removing U.S. troops from Iraq by year's end. Sen. John McCain, who, according to many reporters is known for holding a grudge,

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made a vitriolic comment about history judging Obama very harshly for the troop removal.

Of course it was President Bush who signed the agreement to get the troops out on this date. Obama merely followed up. Also, Iraqi President Maliki made it clarion clear he wanted the U.S. troops gone.

How long would McCain and GOP presidential contenders like Gingrich and Romney have us stay? The pat answer always is "When the military brass on the ground says so." That sounds good, but the fact is everyone knows most military leaders will continue to ask for more time and more money ad infinitum.

The U.S. is leaving behind some 16,000 people, roughly half State Department folks and half contractors, many of whom are security forces. There are many bases there as well, along with the largest U.S. embassy in the world. While there is a concern that Iraq could again descend into violence and chaos, putting U.S. civilians there in danger, there are some 40,000 U.S. troops in the vicinity of Iraq, should they be needed.

Some say Maliki is merely a less histrionic, more humane version of Saddam Hussein, while others are more optimistic. The point is, it's not our concern anymore.

We've spent enough blood and treasure, and what will be will be, good or bad. I pray this is the last time the U.S. will make a foolish, costly foray into a foreign land where we're not wanted and we don't belong.

President Obama has given tax cuts to companies as an incentive to hire returning vets. Michelle Obama and VP Joe Biden's wife Jill have done yeoman's work helping families of the troops. Our paramount concern now is the enormous costs of caring for wounded vets -

wounded both physically and psychologically.

Playing policemen to the world was always bad policy. And the nation building America has engaged in, while sometimes done with philanthropic intentions, invariably gets soiled with corruption and incompetence. With "60 Minutes" reporting recently that roughly 25 percent of American children live below the poverty line, we must turn inward as a nation.

If some call that isolationist, so be it. America is at a crossroads. We cannot help others unless we help ourselves to get back on sound footing founded on ethical business practices, not graft and wildly speculative gambling. I even question whether it's efficacious for every business to desire to go public (IPOs).

As to next Sunday's celebration, perhaps this quote from Dale Evans Rogers sums it up: "Christmas is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas." So Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah to everyone!



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