

Remarks of Ross C. "Rocky" Anderson  
Demand Democracy Rally  
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Patriotism is *not* about just waving the flag, putting yellow ribbon stickers on one's SUV, screaming down dissenters, and shutting down the government of the United States of America.

Patriotism is *not* about mindlessly repeating the lies heard on hate television and radio.

Patriotism is *not* about supporting the prosecution and persecution of people who put it all on the line to inform us, the American people, of what our government is secretly doing to invade our privacy and violate civil and human rights -- while allowing the perpetrators of the real crimes to go free.

Patriotism is *not* about supporting the creation of a mercenary military force that -- with the justification that they are "just following orders" -- kills hundreds of thousands of innocent civilian men, women, and children who pose absolutely no danger to our security.

Patriotism is *not* about blindly following our political parties and their players, even when they

- look the other way during genocides that could be stopped,
- engage our nation in illegal wars of aggression of the type for which people were tried and convicted at the Nuremberg Tribunal, and
- maintain a corrupt political system in which the public safety, health, and security is bargained away by our elected officials in return for payments by the highest bidders -- including the pharmaceutical and insurance industries, the fossil fuel industry, the Monsantos of the world, and the financial industry, none of whom have *any* concern whatsoever for the interests of the American people.

We all know that Washington D.C. is one big political brothel. We all know that public policy is driven, not by what is in the public interest, but by

who pays the most in the campaign-contribution-and-lobbying system in which the highest bidders have their way with our government.

With that knowledge comes a duty *and* an opportunity to take action.

Patriots are those, like you, who will *show up* -- who will *stand up* -- who will continue to *demand* that our nation -- and its elected officials -- live up to the promise of the Founders and our Constitution. And such patriots do not let political partisanship deter them from their democratic and ethical principles.

Patriots are those who understand that a constitutional republic, as we all learned the United States government is *supposed* to be, is a government that represents the *public* interest, a government that has effective checks and balances in a system of separation of power, and a government that protects the individual rights and liberties guaranteed by its Constitution and honors its treaty obligations.

Patriots are those who realize that our Constitution and the fundamentals of a constitutional republic do *not* run on automatic pilot -- that they require constant commitment, vigilance, and hard work by *every* generation if they are to survive.

Let us not betray our children and later generations through complacency, passivity, laziness, cowardice, or any of the many excuses we often hear for why people won't take a stand and act to bring about changes to restore the greatness of our republic.

If we let down, we are succumbing to a very *different* nation -- one that disregards the rule of law, one that disregards fundamental human and civil rights, one that is heading toward authoritarianism with

- a vastly expanded imperial presidency;
- a flaccid, craven, self-serving Congress that, while it demeans and embarrasses us all with its ineptitude and destructiveness to our nation, fails to meet its fundamental constitutional role in deciding on matters of war and peace and providing an effective check on abuses of power and lawlessness by the executive branch; and
- a judicial branch that, through such excuses as the state secrets, ripeness, and political question doctrines, dodges its solemn role in

providing checks on serious abuses of power and government criminality.

So many have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms, for our rights, for our Constitution. Yet the very values upon which our nation was built are being frittered away, bit by bit, by those who won't get away from their television wastelands, from their obsession with spectator sports and celebrity trash, from their mindless, destructive consumption long enough to learn where our nation is headed, how our rights and liberties, and those of other people around the world, are being undermined on a daily basis, and how *each* person can make a real difference in the fight for the survival of our constitutional republic.

The truth is: *We the people* are not the sovereign only *in theory*. We truly *are* the sovereign who *can* make all the difference . . . if only we will. We are the leaders -- and our elected officials will follow our lead if we organize, mobilize, and keep up the heat -- just as ordinary, committed, courageous people did in forming a better society and bolstering the promise of our Constitution as a result of the anti-slavery movement, the women's suffrage movement, the civil rights movement, the labor movement, and the anti-Vietnam-war movement. We can find *inspiration* from those successful movements -- and join in our *own* movement, demanding a restoration of the rule of law, a restoration of our democracy, a restoration of our constitutional republic.

At a time when Congress has an approval rating of 5%; at a time when 60% of those polled say they would vote out every member of Congress, including their own; at a time when our nation is despised in so many nations around the world for drone killings of hundreds, if not thousands, of innocent civilians in at least four sovereign nations; and at a time when not only heads of state in other nations, but we-the-people, are being spied on, often feloniously -- under both federal and state law -- and unconstitutionally, without any accountability whatsoever, we have a solemn obligation, *and* opportunity, as patriots to demand democracy -- to draw our line and make it clear that

- no one who resists major campaign finance reform will *ever* get our vote;
- no one who has voted for an illegal war of aggression against another nation that poses no danger to us will *ever* get our vote;

- no one who supports indefinite detention of U.S. citizens without charges, trial, or the right of habeas corpus will *ever* get our vote; and
- no one who, contrary to the public interest, caves in to the demands of the Monsantos, the fossil fuel industry, the insurance and pharmaceutical industries, and the military-industrial complex will *ever* get our vote.

Theodore Roosevelt, a Republican President, said it well: "To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public."

Democrats seem to love that quote when a Republican is in the White House. And Republicans seem to love it when a Democrat is President. But, as true patriots and principled, moral actors, we must move beyond the sport-team mentality about politics and end the pathetic practice of blindly lining up behind whomever is wearing our political team's jersey.

If we are going to turn things around, we need to get beyond our political partisanship and join our voices -- and our efforts -- together to:

- close the political brothel our political system has become, ending the corrupting influence of money in Congress and the White House, once-and-for-all making certain that our government works for *us* -- for the public interest;
- re-confirm and abide by our treaty commitments, which, under the Constitution, are included in the supreme law of the land; and
- comport our nation's conduct to internationally-recognized human rights guarantees and the most basic civil rights promised in our Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Our constitutional republic has been decimated, degraded, and disgraced -- and we can no longer look away, as if someone *else* will repair it. If we the people are the sovereign, then let us act like it -- becoming informed, engaged, effective citizens!

Jimmy Carter recently said "The United States no longer has a functioning democracy."

A former President of the United States, stating the painful, obvious truth. Yet to find the quote, one had to read *Der Spiegel* magazine, or later search for blog postings repeating the story.

A search of the mainstream, corporate owned media in the United States will find one newspaper reporting the quote -- an Austin, Texas newspaper!

As a nation, as a people, and as members of a world community, we are suffering

- from a complacent, complicit, corporate-owned and corporate-serving media; and
- from elected officials who seem only to be concerned with maintaining their power to continue down the obscene course of government shut-downs; denial of universal health care; neglect of the greatest threat to universal human rights, catastrophic climate change; and the ravaging by unaccountable financial institutions that have caused untold devastation for hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

Let us not simply say we *deserve* better; let us *actually* deserve better by *demanding better*, by *standing up* at every opportunity for *better*, and by *working* for *better* -- for a better community, a better nation, and a better, more humane, more just world.