

**Remarks of Ross C. “Rocky” Anderson
Mayor of Salt Lake City**

**Rally on the Fourth Anniversary of the Invasion
of Iraq**

**Salt Lake City, Utah
March 19, 2007**

This is a momentous time. This is a time when, through our individual actions, our values are made clear. This is a time when each of us has a vital choice to make. We are at a moral and a patriotic fork in the road. Each of us must choose.

Either we say “yes,” through active support or through complacency, to an illegal, tragic, unconscionable war of aggression, to the kidnapping and torture of human beings, and to numerous violations by our President of domestic laws, our Constitution, long-time treaty obligations, and international law –

Or, as we’re doing here today, we say “No.”

We say “no” to any more of this outlandishly expensive, unnecessary, self-destructive, tragic war. We say “no” to the kidnapping and torture of human beings. We say “no” to the blatant violations of our nation’s Constitution.

We see it as our moral and patriotic duty to stand up and fight for our long-held American values. Kidnapping and disappearing people is not an American value. Torture is not an American value. Holding people in prisons without charges is not an American value. The destruction of the right of habeas corpus is not an American value. Attacking and occupying other nations other than in self-defense, completely in violation of our treaty obligations and international law, is not an American value. Allowing our President and his administration to mislead our Congress and the American people into a disastrous war is not an American value. Allowing government to listen in on people’s conversations without a warrant is not an American value. The assertion by a president of dictatorial power, beyond our Constitution, beyond the Congress, and beyond the courts, is not an American value.

The rule of law is an American value. Holding our leaders accountable for their violations of our domestic law, our Constitution, and our treaty obligations is an American value. Defending our constitutional form of government, with a balance of power between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, is an American value. Working in collaboration with our long-time allies is an American value. Respect for other nations' sovereignty is an American value. Compassion, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the protection of human life are American values. And the observance and honoring of human rights is an American value.

This is a time when our nation can communicate to the world and later generations either that we are a belligerent people and will impose our will and dominance on the rest of the world through violence, torture, and death, or that we still believe in the United Nations Charter and our other solemn treaty obligations and will comply with the international prohibition against wars of aggression.

This is a time when we can create a legacy, for our children and their children to ponder, either as a nation that commits and condones the kidnapping, disappearing, and torture of human beings, or as a nation that affirms the values of human decency and of our long-time commitments to human rights.

This is a time when we can either stand by as a president and his vice-president assert their unlimited power under an alarming invocation of something they refer to as the "unitary executive branch," or we can take a patriot's stand in defense of our constitutional form of government, in which there are checks and balances on the power of all three branches.

As moral actors, and as patriots who love our country and our Constitution, we each must take a stand. We must each decide: Do I stand up in opposition or do I support the outrages being committed in our nation's name?

Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, the great Russian writer and dissident, once asked, "Is it permissible merely to carry out orders and commit one's conscience to someone else's keeping?"¹

The grave problems afflicting our nation present each of us with a fundamental responsibility, morally and as patriots who love our nation and what it

¹ http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/The_Gulag_Archipelago

stands for. We must speak out, loudly and at every opportunity, against the abuses of power, breaches of trust, violations of the law, and heinous human rights violations being committed in our name.

We come together today as people from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds, people who are profoundly troubled what our nation is becoming. We come together as people who demand an end to the deceptions, the illegal and immoral policies, and the abuses of power that have been perpetrated at the highest levels of the federal administration. The people of this great nation deserve a government that promotes our interests and is accountable to our laws. Yet Congress and the Bush administration have consistently evinced a deliberate, flagrant, arrogant disrespect for the law and the common good. We are here today to raise our voices out of deep concern for our country – and for our world.

While invading and occupying Iraq and in conducting a so-called war on terror, President Bush has consistently claimed he is defending the American way of life and our nation's values, and advancing the cause of freedom in the world. President Bush, however, has shown a flagrant disrespect for domestic and international law, and for the basic principles that give our nation its identity.

In the midst of World War II, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said:

As men do not live by bread alone, they do not fight by armaments alone. Those who man our defenses and those behind them who build our defenses must have the stamina and the courage which come from unshakable belief in the manner of life which they are defending. The mighty action that we are calling for cannot be based on a disregard of all the things worth fighting for.²

As President Roosevelt recognized, our armed forces should only be committed to a struggle in accord with our deepest values. Rather than supporting our troops by ensuring they fight in a just cause, President Bush has disgraced our armed forces—and our nation—by prosecuting an illegal, tragic war in Iraq, and by engaging in abuses of power and horrific violations of human rights. We are, sadly becoming like those tyrannical, human rights-violating nations from which we have always tried to distinguish ourselves.

²<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrthefourfreedoms.htm>

Over the past six years, the United States has captured and brutally confined hundreds of prisoners, usually without charges, at Guantanamo Bay. Yet we condemn nations like those of the former Soviet Union and North Korea, which have subjected people to arbitrary arrest, torture, and savage imprisonment. Will we permit our great nation to become like them?

Over the past six years, the CIA, with the direction and support of the Bush administration, has kidnapped people, sent them to secret prisons where they are held incommunicado without charges and tortured. Yet we condemn governments like that of Argentina during the 1970's and 1980's, which tortured and "disappeared" people as part of its "dirty war." Will we permit our great nation to become like them?

Over the past six years, President Bush has supervised an illegal program of warrantless domestic surveillance. Yet we condemn governments like that of the former East Germany, whose secret police destroyed the privacy and dignity of countless citizens through pervasive wiretapping and surveillance. Will we permit our great nation to become like them?

Four long years ago, the Bush administration began a war of aggression against a nation that posed no threat to our security. How could we now condemn the aggression of nations such as imperial Japan and Nazi Germany, whose arbitrary seizure and control of territory led the world to formulate the UN Charter and criminalize wars of aggression. Will we permit our great nation to become like them? The United Nations Charter, which is violated every day this war continues, provides: "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered." By commencing this war without permitting the United Nations weapons inspectors to complete their work, and without bringing the matter before the United Nations Security Council, the Bush administration, with the aid and assistance of a complicit Congress, violated that most sacred international agreement – an agreement that provides perhaps the only hope for peace among nations.

While the United States is a far freer society than many of the world's tyrannies, our government is perpetrating alarming, authoritarian policies and practices. As John Winthrop famously said, "For we must consider that we shall be as a city on a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us." We cannot serve as an example for the world and live in accord with our ideals if our conduct resembles that of rogue nations we have historically opposed. Loyalty to our most basic

values requires that we demand accountability for leaders who violate the laws and precepts that form our identity as Americans. As committed, patriotic citizens, we demand the impeachment and removal from office of President Bush and Vice President Cheney.

Anything less than full accountability through the impeachment process betrays our history, our principles, and our notion of what it means to be an American. Anything less betrays the sacrifices so many brave men and women have made to secure freedom and the rule of law in our nation and around the world. If Congress continues its pattern of timid inaction and fails to impeach the president, future generations of Americans, as well as other nations, will have cause to fear the rise of another corrupt president who will be encouraged by President Bush's legacy of authoritarian governance, flagrant fraud, and lack of accountability to Congress and the American people.

Consider the corruption and dishonesty that have led our nation into an unnecessary war, based upon false justifications. Consider the lies that have led to the deaths of over 650,000 people, with many more having been seriously maimed, brain damaged, or rendered mentally ill. As a result of this war, our nation's reputation throughout much of the world has been destroyed. We have many more enemies bent on our destruction than before our invasion of Iraq. And the hatred toward us has grown to the point that it will take many years, perhaps generations, to overcome the loathing created by our invasion and occupation of a Muslim country.

A few examples make clear the astounding violations of trust and abuses of power by President Bush in leading the nation to war against Iraq, each of them meriting impeachment and removal from office.

On September 7, 2002, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Bush met with members of the press at Camp David. President Bush represented that a "new" report from the International Atomic Energy Agency—the IAEA—stated that Iraq was "six months away" from building a nuclear weapon. "I don't know what more evidence we need," commented the President.

He was lying. There was no such report. In fact, numerous IAEA reports consistently denied any indication that Iraq had *any* nuclear capability, and the IAEA's chief spokesperson stated that no such report had been issued by the IAEA.

President Bush further betrayed the tremendous trust bestowed upon him after the events of September 11, 2001 by instilling in many of us the fear that Saddam Hussein was seeking to purchase nuclear materials from an African nation. In fact, much of the US intelligence community disagreed. An October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate included an assessment that “Saddam does not yet have nuclear weapons or sufficient material to make any.” The State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) also stated in the report that “The claims of Iraqi pursuit of natural uranium in Africa are, in INR’s assessment, highly dubious.”

The fraud about Hussein building up a nuclear capability did not stop with the phony Niger story. During September 2002, Condoleezza Rice and President Bush represented to the public that Hussein was purchasing aluminum tubes to enrich uranium for a nuclear weapon. However, the October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) virtually screams out the view of various intelligence agencies that the tubes were of no use in a nuclear program. Furthermore, the IAEA concluded that the aluminum tubes in question were not directly suitable for the manufacture of centrifuges. That did not stop President Bush, however, from stating repeatedly, including in his 2003 State of the Union Address, that Saddam was seeking aluminum tubes to produce nuclear fuel. No greater cause for impeachment can be imagined than leading our Congress and our nation into a tragic, illegal war of aggression based on false information.

The tragic, bloody invasion and occupation of Iraq, by order of President Bush, is a clearly impeachable offense, violating the UN Charter, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the Nuremberg Tribunal Pact. All of these agreements are international treaties that the US has signed. Under Article VI of the Constitution, international treaties are, along with the Constitution, the “supreme law of the land.” Therefore, in carrying out the invasion and occupation of Iraq, President Bush violated not only numerous international conventions, but also US domestic law.

President Bush is a war criminal. He has blatantly violated relevant treaties and constitutional provisions in leading the US to a so-called “pre-emptive” war against Iraq, without any justification in law or in fact. He must be held accountable, through impeachment and removal from office, or the many violated treaties and constitutional provisions are nothing more than paper and pretense.

Following the events of September 11, 2001, President Bush illegally authorized the warrantless wiretapping of American citizens, in clear violation of

the 4th Amendment to the US Constitution and in direct violation of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA. He claimed, in complete disregard of the US Constitution and relevant domestic law, that what he was doing was legal. Last August, a U.S. District Court judge declared that Bush has violated the First and Fourth Amendments to the US Constitution. Impeachment and removal from office is the only appropriate remedy for a President who asserts such abusive, authoritarian power, in contravention of the US Constitution.

President Bush has also tremendously undermined the moral standing of the United States by directing the CIA to kidnap people in other countries, incarcerate them without charges, and torture them. His shameful dereliction of duty in this regard is a blight on our nation's honor that can be remedied only by impeachment.

Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen, was deported to Syria from JFK Airport. Once in Syria, he was beaten with electrical cables for two weeks, then imprisoned in an underground cell for the better part of a year.

Muslim cleric Osama Moustafa Hassan Nasr was kidnapped in Milan, Italy, by US and Italian intelligence agents and sent to Egypt, where he was tortured during his four-year detention.

Khaled El-Masri, a German citizen, was kidnapped by CIA agents and flown to a secret prison in Afghanistan, where he was tortured during his five months in prison there. Apparently after it was discovered he was not who his captors thought he was, he was taken to Albania and left in a forest. To this day, he has no idea why he was kidnapped, imprisoned, and tortured.

Those are among approximately 150 foreign nationals who have been victims of "extraordinary rendition." Under this CIA program, intelligence agents kidnap people and send them to secret sites abroad for interrogation and, frequently, torture and inhumane treatment. We are left to ask: What has our great nation become when our president orders and condones such atrocities, in violation of federal statute and international agreements against torture?

Bush administration policies and statements stripping detainees of basic protections under international law have led to the torture and murder of prisoners, many of whom have never been charged with any crime. Consider the case of Abed Hamed Mowhoush.

Mowhoush turned himself over to US forces in Iraq in November 2003. Chief Warrant Officer Lewis Welshofer, who did not receive anything other than “sparse” guidelines about how to conduct prisoner interrogations, received a captain’s memo saying there were no specific rules of engagement for interrogations in Iraq. Captured detainees were considered “unprivileged combatants,” a status the Bush Administration had suggested meant detainees were not to be afforded the protections of the Geneva Conventions. With the sense that the Geneva Conventions did not apply to Mowhoush, Welshofer called in a team that beat Mowhoush with sledgehammer handles. Later, Mowhoush’s hands were bound, he was struck repeatedly in the painful spot near the humerus, and was doused with water. Finally, Welshofer shoved Mowhoush, who was wrapped with electrical cord, head-first into a sleeping bag. Welshofer sat on Mowhoush’s chest and blocked his nose and mouth. Mowhoush, whose autopsy revealed “massive” bruising and five broken ribs, suffocated and died.

The torture and killing of Mowhoush is only one of dozens of cases of murder – and hundreds of cases of cruel torture – at the hands of US personnel in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo. Congress must investigate President Bush’s involvement in orchestrating the unconscionable treatment of people detained by US personnel.

With respect to the treaties and other laws prohibiting torture and other mistreatment of detainees, President Bush has utterly failed to meet his duty, under Article III of the Constitution, to “take care that the laws be faithfully executed.” President Bush even added a signing statement to the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005 that states, contrary to the separation of powers so crucial to our constitutional system of government, that he has the sole authority to interpret and enforce the act. For his gross dereliction of duty in not ensuring the faithful execution of US law, President Bush should be impeached and removed from office.

In addition, under the Nuremberg principle of “command responsibility,” President Bush’s failure to stop and punish atrocities renders him culpable for them. For that, he should be held accountable through impeachment and removal from office. The Nuremberg principles are not to be applied solely to the vanquished. They are to be given effect and enforced by who subscribed to them.

Sexual humiliations, incarceration for years without charges being brought, lit cigarettes put out in detainees’ ears, inmates hanging by their arms, brutal beatings, attacks by unmuzzled dogs, false executions, sensory deprivations,

psychological torture, waterboarding, dozens of killings, and other forms of heinous torture of human beings—if these acts—consonant with Bush administration policy yet in violation of numerous treaty obligations and US domestic law—are not deserving of impeachment and removal from office, nothing ever would be.

We proudly say stand up and “no” to the outrageous abuses of power, the violations of law, and the heinous violations of human rights committed by George Bush and his administration. Let’s all join together in shouting “no” so loudly that no one will ever again imagine they can get away with these sorts of atrocities in the name of our great nation.

Do we support the assertion of power by one man to engage in warrantless wiretapping of American citizens?

Do we support the torture of our fellow human beings?

Do we support the kidnapping, disappearance, and brutal imprisonment of people?

Do we support the killing, maiming, and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people on the basis of lies and ever-changing justifications?

Do we support an imperial president who repeatedly, blatantly, and arrogantly disregards US and international law?

This is a new day. We can unify in our insistence upon the truth, upon peace-making, upon more humane treatment of our brothers and sisters around the world.

We will continue to call for the impeachment of President Bush, a most appropriate response to his blatant abuses of power. We will continue to resist the lies, the deception, the outrages. We will insist that peace be pursued, and that, as a nation, we help those in need. Let us join together to break the cycle of hatred, of intolerance, of violence.

We urge Congress, be silent no more.

We urge all Americans, regardless of party, be silent no more. Take a stand – morally and as patriotic Americans.

Let impeachment be the first step toward national reconciliation – and toward penance for the outrages committed in our nation’s name.