

Remarks of Mayor Ross C. “Rocky” Anderson  
Washington, D.C.  
January 27, 2007

As Americans, we share common values – values of honesty, compassion, and, whenever possible, non-violence. We also recognize the moral responsibility we have to raise our voices in support of those values when they are under assault.

There is no morality without the willingness to act.

That’s why we are here today.

Much is said about “family values.” In our families, we have learned, and we teach, the values of telling the truth, of helping those who are in need, and of never resorting to violence, except as a last resort.

Tragically, those fundamental values have been horribly betrayed, leading to this devastating time in our nation’s history.

Who among you loves your country so much that you have come here today to raise your voice out of deep concern for our nation?

Who among you embraces the fundamental values underlying our Constitution so dearly that you have come here today to let the world know that we, as Americans, abhor the kidnapping, disappearance, and imprisonment of people without any semblance of due process . . .

that we, as Americans, abhor unconstitutional warrantless wiretapping . . .

that we, as Americans, abhor the torture of human beings . . .

and that we, as Americans, will always stand up and fight against an outrageous, tragic, so-called pre-emptive war that violates international law, that has alienated many of our long-time allies around the world, and that was sold to the American people and the world at large on the basis of blatant lies?

We are here because we value compassion, truth, and human rights so much that we want the world to know how embarrassed we are, how sad we are, how outraged we are that our president and a complacent Congress, with the aid and assistance of a dismal mainstream news media, have caused millions of people so much pain and tragedy.

That is not what we, as Americans, stand for. That is not what our country stands for. And we want the world to know it.

We are here today as true patriots.

Blind obedience to bad leadership is not patriotism.

Maligning the patriotism of others who stand up out of concern for the betrayal of our most cherished values is not patriotism.

To sit back and let others fight for a return to decency, for a return to the rule of law, and for a return to the values of truth, compassion, and human rights is not patriotism.

And sending our servicemen and servicewomen into harm's way, without an honest justification, without competent leadership, and without a coherent plan is not patriotism.

As Theodore Roosevelt, a truly great Republican president, said:

*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*

*people. Nothing but the truth should be spoken about him or any one else.*

Consistent with those wise words of Theodore Roosevelt, we are here today to tell, and to demand, the truth. That's what patriots do.

That's what people exercising their moral responsibility do. We forfeit our humanity when we refrain from saying "No more" to wrongdoing.

Patriotism is love of our country and of the values we, as Americans, most passionately embrace.

We are here because we love our country.

We are here because we are alarmed that the values underlying our constitution – the values we share as compassionate, freedom-loving people – have been under attack by a dishonest, war-mongering, human-rights-violating president.

But we must keep in mind: This is not just about a reckless president who has taken our nation so far astray.

This is not just about his incredibly arrogant, defense-contractor-lackey vice-president, who assured us while selling this war that we would be welcomed by Iraqis with open arms as liberators.

This is not just about his secretaries of state, both of whom admitted, a few months before 9/11 and before they were assigned to make the case for the invasion of Iraq, that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction and had not rearmed after the first Gulf War.

And this is not just about his former incredibly incompetent secretary of defense who assured us, before the war commenced, that it

would take perhaps six days, perhaps six weeks, but he doubted six months to bring the war to a conclusion.

No, this is also about our obsequious Congress and about most of the people in our nation who could have insisted, before the invasion of Iraq, that our country follow international law, rather than acting as a go-it-alone international outlaw cowboy, mistaken about the facts, lying to the international community, and clumsily conducting an immoral war that has led to nowhere but chaos, tragedy, and greater hatred and hostility.

As mayor of the capital city of the reddest state in the nation, I am proud to join with millions of good, patriotic Americans who are standing up and willing to raise their voices against this madness.

We are here today to say, “No more!”

No more Iraq war.

No more God-is-on-our-side religious nonsense to justify this immoral, illegal war.

No more torture of human beings.

No more denial of the right of habeas corpus.

No more kidnapping of people and sending them off to secret prisons in nations where they will be tortured.

No more glorification of torture by the entertainment industry.

No more centrally-owned, hysteria-driven, corporate news media complicit in selling the Bush administration’s lies to the American people.

No more unconstitutional warrantless wiretapping of American citizens.

No more dependence on foreign oil.

No more wars to provide a fix to oil-addicted American consumers.

No more failure to support clean, domestically produced alternative sources of energy.

No more manipulation of national intelligence for political purposes.

No more manipulation of our news media with false propaganda.

No more authoritarian assertions of power by the president.

No more silence by the American people.

We have a tremendous opportunity to come together as a nation – not as red or blue, not as black or white, not as rich or poor – but as a people who share the common values underlying our Constitution and the formation of this great nation.

Now is the time to take a stand and speak up. Personal responsibility calls upon each of us to assert a basic, common morality.

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 without charges being brought against them?

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

It is time for leaders who can move us toward peace – leaders who will pursue peace and constructive relations as aggressively as the Bush administration and Congress have pursued violence, hostility, and hatred.

Let us all join together, admit our nation's tragic mistakes of the past, and pursue constructive engagement with all peoples and all nations in the pursuit of a more compassionate, peaceful world.

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 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.

Let us build a better nation, and a better world, together.