

Subject: Second draft for Saturday

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From: Dennis Burke <burke@fastq.com>

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Thank you.

The man in the White House believes that, when he starts dropping bombs on faraway people, we will fall in line behind him.

But America must become a beacon of justice and peace and self-determination in the world; It is to this idea that we are patriots, and as patriots we say NO to Bush. NO to an unnecessary war. For an unnecessary war is, by definition, a war crime, and when was it ever truly patriotic to salute criminal behavior? When has criminal behavior ever been the right path for a nation's own best interests?

The man in the White House believes that, when our American soldiers start coming home to our communities in coffins, that we will rally around him -that we will forget what he did to our budget surpluses, our Social Security funds, our Medicare, our pensions and stocks. Merciless rulers from time out of mind have tried that bloody distraction. We are not distracted by the blood of our own sons and daughters, Mr. Bush. Each drop of that precious blood calls our hearts to an election next year and we are an army of people who come against you at the ballot box. Harm our children and watch us. Bush's war will be the sorry end of your family's long black mark on American history.

Mr. Bush is counting on our patriotism. He is correct in assuming that we are patriots and that we will take our stand for America and for American values. He will be surprised, however, to see what it means when we actually do that.

Mr. Bush has done some remarkable things. He may yet earn the Nobel Peace Prize: who else could bring France and Germany together? Who else could bring together -- as we ARE indeed coming together -- American Liberals and American Conservatives? Indeed, we will lay down our old arguments while, together, we fight to save our Constitutional Bill of Rights and fight to save our own true security and America's honorable position in the world.

Mr. Bush believes that, when the dust settles and the bodies of Iraqi children are quickly trucked away, long before the war-profiteering news networks uncap their cameras, we will be satisfied that it is over, that a tyrant has been removed and a people freed.

Saddam is one of the leftover Cold War puppets, now getting his walking papers. Is he being replaced in favor of justice and self-determination? Will the people of the region now have the ability to control their own destinies? Is that the purpose of our proposed permanent military bases there? Is that the objective of all the oil executives preparing to arrive in all their little jets? Or is this simply the beginning of another era of repression and exploitation, for which we all will reap tomorrow's whirlwinds? The people of the Middle East have no illusions as to our purpose in Iraq. The people of Kosovo and Afghanistan have no illusions, nor should we. The difference is, we the people of America have full responsibility for the actions of our government, and we must remove the present gang of oily men who have wrested moral control away from us.

Mr. Bush knows that one good missile attack on the world's most historic city is good for an immediate boost in his overnight ratings. He knows that, when the games begin, we have to choose which side of the stadium to sit on, and we will sit with the Americans and wave our flag. The problem is, Mr. Bush, that this is not a game, and what you are proposing is unlike anything

this generation of Americans, though we are no angels, have ever done or ever wanted to do. We are not with you sir, and you bring shame upon our flag and our traditions and our dreams of a better, safer, more peaceful and prosperous world.

Let Mr. Bush assume that we are patriots, for we are. we pledge our patriotism today. Let him tremble as we do so.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic - the Republic! -- for which it stands: one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty --Liberty! -- and Justice - Justice! -- for All - for All, indeed!

Thank you, and please sign the patriots' pledge on GrannyD.com!