

NOW OR NEVER: THE FINAL PROTEST

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THE PURPOSE

This is the summer of our discontent. In a few short weeks, three and a half years of suppressed anger, frustration and despair will spill onto the streets of New York City. Many of us have been there and done that before. We marched to protest the preparations for war, and we lost. We marched to protest the invasion and the killing, and we lost. We marched to end the occupation and bring our soldiers home, and we lost. This time, it will be our final protest. This time, it's now or never.

Starting on August 29th, hundreds of thousands of us, from every walk of life, and from every state in the nation, will gather to condemn the effrontery of holding the 2004 Republican National Convention in the home of the Twin Towers. We will gather to denounce the GOP as it attempts to exploit the tragedy that befell this great city on September 11th. We will gather to rage at the conventioners as they gleefully applaud the most devastating policies in the history of this country. But this will be the last time we will gather to raise our voices in protest against this deplorable presidency. Because this time, it's now or never.

In all honesty, we're not really coming to protest the convention. We're not coming to influence the people in Madison Square Garden who admire and support George Bush. We're not coming to rebuke those who are pledged to this failed president and his destructive goals. We're coming to New York to make a very important statement to the undecided voters of America, and to send a very crucial message to people all around the world. We're coming to speak our piece for the very last time. And we must be heard, because this time, it's now or never.

THE MESSAGE

Our presence in NYC will demonstrate the deep outrage against this administration felt by so many millions of Americans. But we also must convince potential voters that THEY truly have the power to do the following:

- RESTORE RESPECT FOR THIS COUNTRY AND ITS LEADERS
- RESTORE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE PEOPLE
- RESTORE COOPERATION WITH THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY
- RESTORE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND A HEALTHY JOB MARKET
- RESTORE RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
- RESTORE HONESTY AND INTEGRITY IN THE WHITE HOUSE
- RESTORE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR DOMESTIC PROGRAMS
- RESTORE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE
- RESTORE RESPECT FOR THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

More important, however, is the message we will send to the people around the world who will be watching this election with trepidation and concern. Right now, tens of millions of people in other countries openly and vocally oppose the Bush administration, its war, and its go-it-alone bravado. There is no doubt that if the American people are perceived as supporters of this doctrine, the world's anger and hatred will target us directly. We will be as despised and feared as our government.

Our message to the world will be simple and clear:

- WE DO NOT SUPPORT THE POLICIES OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION
- WE CARE ABOUT OUR REPUTATION IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY
- WE CARE ABOUT COOPERATION AMONG NATIONS
- WE APOLOGIZE TO THE WORLD FOR THE DEVASTATION AND DEATH CAUSED BY THE ILLEGAL AND IMMORAL INVASION OF IRAQ

This will be our final clarion call for a new direction for our nation. There will be no better opportunity to be seen and heard. If we miss this one, the cause will be forever lost. This time, it's now or never.

THE CHALLENGE

Earlier this year, the people of Spain took to the streets to mourn the deaths of nearly 200 people who died in the terrorist bombing of a commuter train. More than two million people gathered in Madrid alone, while nearly 12 million others joined in street protests throughout the country. The outraged people of Spain, NOT THE TERRORISTS, brought down the incumbent government that had supported the invasion of Iraq. Somewhere, here, there is a lesson to be learned.

Spain has a population slightly over 40 million. Do the math. Nearly 35 percent of the people of Spain protested the government policies they believed had led to the bombing. Nearly 35 percent!

The United States has a population nearly five times that of Spain. Law enforcement officials in New York City are expecting close to 250,000 people to protest the GOP Convention. That small number will guarantee as pitifully little media coverage as was given to the previous anti war protests. That number will imply that only a FRACTION OF ONE PERCENT OF THE AMERICAN POPULATION is angry enough to protest. And that's not true!

This is a challenge that has to be confronted by everyone in this country who is at all nervous about the outcome of the 2004 election. But this is a challenge that can be met and can be overcome:

- COME TO NEW YORK AND JOIN THE PROTESTS
- SUPPORT THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE ORGANIZING PROTESTS
- DEMAND THAT THE MEDIA COVER THE PROTESTS
- JOIN THE PROTESTS IN YOUR OWN LOCALITY IF YOU CAN'T COME TO NYC
- ORGANIZE AND PUBLICIZE PROTESTS IN YOUR TOWN OR CITY

This is it, people. This is the homestretch. The GOP Convention in New York City is the final opportunity to converge in memorable numbers. It is our final chance to protest in unison throughout the nation. It is the final photo op to show the American public and the world that we will not sit quietly and allow the Karl Rove Theater to play out its propaganda event without a deafening response.

We urge you to rise to the challenge. There will not be another one as critical in our lifetime. This is the final episode in a struggle we have to win. This time, for sure, it's now or never.

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