

# Voting for President

I've agonized over whether or not I should write and post the following. I have decided to do so because I think this election is, by far, the most important of my lifetime. I've voted in Presidential elections since 1976—the first year I was eligible—and, in all that time, I think I've voted FOR a candidate once or twice.

The rest of the time I've voted AGAINST someone.

If you're reading this essay, I know you don't think I'm a stupid man. If you did, you'd not be here, you'd not have read my books. Please don't judge me as stupid if you read the following and decide my choice is not your choice. I don't think those whose opinions differ from mine are stupid, provided they have thought about things, reasoned them out and are confident in their choices. Reasonable people can disagree and often do, and the intellectual freedom and honesty that allows that to happen is certainly to be respected and celebrated.

Some of you will just want the box score, and won't read the material that follows. I won't torture you by forcing you to scroll down: I'm going to cast my vote for John Kerry for President. My reasoning is explained below and if you'll indulge me and read through it, I think you'll understand how I reached the decision I did. Thanks for taking the time to do that.

## **The War on Terrorism**

My novels make it very clear how much I respect the sacrifice and heroism of the men and women who choose to make it their life's work to defend us and our way of life. Many of you know my brother is a career military officer in the Army. He's currently stationed in Afghanistan and was the first Ranger officer on the ground in Grenada. My respect for the military is certainly colored by my love and respect for my brother, but as a historian and an avid reader of military histories, I have a grander sense of the tradition and responsibilities of warriors.

The President has taken great pains to let us know we're at war with terrorism, but there are countless instances of his taking his eye off the ball. I find it incredible, insulting and wholly irresponsible for him to address an international audience and say to the terrorists, "Bring it on!" It's fine for an American general surrounded in Bastogne to reply to a Nazi offer to accept surrender with "Nuts!" since he was there and was going to be taking the shelling that would result. It's something else again for a man who has never seen combat to hide behind an ocean and invite our enemies to blow our sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives and grandparents to pieces.

I've read a great deal about the war in Afghanistan, which was conducted brilliantly by Special Forces operatives, especially the Green Berets, whose

heroism and skill allowed us and our allies to do something that had defied the British and the Russians/Soviets: conquer Afghanistan. (Alexander, Ala-ed-din Mohammed, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane all managed it too, but in those days the Afghan tribes could just retreat to the mountains and no one was dumb enough to go after them.) The histories of our war in Afghanistan do make it quite clear that the mission was left unfulfilled as assets were moved into position for the attack on Iraq, so our best shot at getting Osama bin Laden failed. (Curiously, the Bush administration turned the job of getting him over to the same warlords who had failed to get him when the Clinton administration had them working on the problem.)

The reasons we went into Iraq don't bear discussing for two reasons. The first is that they constantly shift and don't make sense. For example, the supposed link between Iraq and Al Qaeda has been debunked, and common sense points out that it never existed. Bin Laden's anger with the US began when he was denied the chance to take his Moslem warriors to liberate Kuwait from Iraq in the first war—so he had no love for Saddam. Al Qaeda is a fundamentalist Moslem organization and Saddam had a secular realm, so the intersection there fails as well. Moreover, if there HAD been a connection, we would have seen surplus Stinger missiles (which the Taliban and Al Qaeda had plenty of) used against our planes during the the 90s and the latest assault. We never did.

The second reason they don't bear discussing is that they are immaterial to the situation at hand. We attacked, we got in, and we're stuck. The military dreads, with good reason, MISSION CREEP, and that's exactly what we've got there. The military is trained and directed at destroying the enemy, and they're better at it than anyone else in the world. They are not trained to build nations, and while I know every single man and woman over there is doing the utmost for the Iraqi people, they haven't the knowledge nor the funding to be able to accomplish that task. It's like asking a Matador to keep peace in a day-care center—the cape works for a while, but then you have to stick someone with the sword, and that's when all the fun stops.

The President has said that we're going to establish democracy in Iraq. The Vice President has pointed to El Salvador as an example of a place where democracy has succeeded against a guerilla insurgency. Certainly the 1980s and 1990s were rife with examples of democracy succeeding: the former Soviet Union, the Philipines, Nicaragua, Chile and a few other places have embraced democracy. There is no doubting what Winston Churchill suggested, that democracy may not be a perfect form of government, but it's the best alternative we have.

What the President and the neo-conservatives have missed is that in ALL the cases they care to cite, democracy was never IMPOSED. Democracy is government "of the people, by the people, for the people." It arises from their work to throw off oppression and is valued because of the hard work to get rid of the despot. In essence, it has to be earned, and because we got rid of the tyrant,

we deprived the Iraqi people of their chance to earn it. Moreover, because we became the new authority figure, and we invested power in people who had been exiles and long on our payroll, we supplied them a new master to hate.

The Bush administration has shown repeatedly that it fails to understand the fundamentalist Moslem mindset as regards the West. At its height, the Moslem empire extended from Spain to Indonesia. To them, the loss of Barcelona to Charlemagne in 801, their expulsion from Spain in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the collapse of the Ottoman caliphate in 1924 are fierce blows that still sting mightily. The Crusades were a clear and still lasting reminder of the West's hatred of Islam, and the meddling of colonial powers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries didn't help anything.

As proof of this we need look no further than Osama bin Laden's declaration of war on the West, when he referred to the United States as Crusaders. Whereas we view our move into Saudi Arabia as one to free Kuwait, he saw it as the conquest of Islam's most holy sites by the Crusaders. (With Jerusalem in the hands of Israel, and Iraq now in our hands, ALL of the major Islamic holy sites are controlled by the West. Regardless of your politics, you have to know that's going to stick like a bone in the throat of any faithful Moslem.)

Moreover, the battle between fundamentalist Islam and the West is a clash of cultures. In the United States we have a parallel situation in the clash between fundamentalist Christianity and more secular groups. The vehemence and hatred, even violence, that issues like abortion and same-sex unions engenders here is akin to what we're seeing directed at us by Al Qaeda. This isn't a war that can be won by bullets and bombs.

This battle will take generations: two, to be specific, if we are lucky, and quite probably more. The first is the transitional generation—the one that suffers under the imposition of strictures and the second is the generation that grows up under them. Direct parallels are the civil rights and equal rights movements here in the US. I grew up with affirmative action, forced integration and the expanding role of women in the society. The next generation has grown up with that stuff being normal, and they are far more accepting. And yet, despite this being a qualified success here in the United States, it was something that grew spontaneously out of our society. Had it been imposed, it would have been resisted and we'd still be fractured.

So, we're in Iraq. We're going to be there for a good long time. I will vote against President Bush both because he got us stuck there AND because I don't want to risk his advisors deciding it's time for the next domino to fall.

## **Homeland Security**

I fly a great deal, and I think a great deal about security. In one of my more recent novels, **Ghost War**, I outline a simple, low-intensity terrorist campaign that is sufficient for deposing the government of a sophisticated and technologically advanced society, much like our own. The book goes into the whole thing in great detail. I was thinking about that issue before 9/11, and nothing I have seen imposed in the way of security measures since the tragedy would prevent terrorists from doing here exactly what I outline in the book.

I find that terrifying.

The simple fact of the matter is that all the security measures put into place since 9/11 have not prevented a single terrorist act from taking place in the United States. The only thing these measures do is to close the barn door after the horses have left. The means the terrorists used on 9/11 were denied to future terrorists not because jack-knives were no longer allowed on planes, but because the passengers now know what the rules of the game are. I sit in First Class fairly often and the sense of those around me is that we're not going to be cowed as others were. We will defend ourselves and the plane.

The security strictures imposed are smoke and mirrors. A small sack full of pennies in a sock becomes a club, but they're allowed on planes. Take any CD and snap it in half. Now you've got two crescent-shaped blades with which you could stab anyone. According to the 9/11 Commission report, the 9/11 terrorists did test runs using eye-drop bottles stuffed with nitroglycerine-soaked cotton, which was sufficient to blow a hole in the hull of a plane. None of the security measures I've seen instituted would prevent anyone from hauling such a mini-bomb along with them, assembling it in the lavatory, and having it go off later.

The only way we're going to be safe is if the government institutes educational programs telling us what to look for and how to deal with it. They need to beef up the Neighborhood Watch program, allowing us to have a stake in our own security. They don't do that because, as well they know, information is power. They don't want to relinquish any.

I'm not a grand conspiracy theorist who believes that security alerts are called to deflect criticism and attention from important issues. I do feel, however, that the security planning is poorly directed, has no clear mission, has none of the resources it needs to be effective and has failed to enlist the greatest resource we have—our people—to deal with a problem that threatens us all. For this failure I will vote against the President.

### **The Science Issue**

I'm a science fiction author. I do a lot of reading and research. I've been interested in the promise of genetics for decades and have read a great deal about it. Recently the First Lady opined in a speech that those who touted the

promise of stem-cell research were holding out false hope to people because any true results would be years in the future.

By this reasoning, research into a polio vaccine never should have happened because the beneficial results were years in the future. The campaign to wipe out small pox never should have happened because the results were years away. It is a ridiculous argument that insults the intelligence of anyone with enough neurons to form a synapse.

I understand the moral argument against using fetal stem-cells for research. It is seen as an encouragement of abortion. People can differ on that issue, but the core situation is this: abortion is still legal in the United States, and if the genetic heritage of an unborn child can be used to save the life of someone else who is gravely ill, how better to honor that child's unrealized potential? These unborn children become the ultimate in organ donors, who will save millions and perhaps even allow those maimed by war to get their eyes back, or otherwise regain some normal life.

Despite calls for us to travel to Mars, the overall record of this administration has been anti-science. I cannot support that. I believe that the advancement of knowledge is good, especially when it holds the promise of making life better. For this reason I will vote against the President.

### **The Education Issue**

In having read this far, you've now read more in one sitting than the President reads in a day. I will admit believing, based on his lack of erudition, his ease of confusion, and his overwhelming reluctance to admit reading anything, that he is functionally illiterate. I think this is dangerous because what I've read on my own about Iraq and terrorism and history and intelligence has allowed me to make the assessments I have concerning policy and where I think we should go.

That the President is less well read than I am on any subject terrifies me. Moreover, having issues and facts read by others, digested and presented to him with their slant is scary. James Bamford's book **A Pretext for War** is a very readable overview of all that has gone on. It provides some chilling profiles of the men who advise the President. Events clearly have not unfolded as they have long believed they would and yet there is no evidence to suggest they are adapting to the new circumstances.

Which brings us to education. The "No Child Left Behind" bill was a good idea. In fact, the only bad thing about it is that the government failed to fund it. This is akin to your employer coming to you and saying, "It's company policy that all employees will now drive Hummers. However, it's not in our budget to provide them, but if you want to stay employed, you have to drive one, so do what you can."

The President and others would say that the war on terrorism is eating up the budget (see below). That's fine, but to then turn around and tout your education program, or any of a number of other unfunded mandates to the states, is disingenuous and really shows no respect for the electorate. For this reason I will vote against the President.

## **The Economy**

It has to be a bitter pill for Reagan conservatives to watch the President spending like a drunken fool. We've gone from a 5.6 trillion dollar surplus to a projected half a trillion dollar deficit in four years. Moreover, despite the deficit, the President insisted on signing more tax cuts into law. It's one thing to spend more than you're bringing in—most Americans do that. It's quite another to turn around and tell your boss that he can cut your wages, too, since the money he saves clearly will be invested in the business and will get the economy going again.

I should state right here that I've been a beneficiary of the Bush recession. My foreign rights contracts are negotiated in Euros, so as the dollar drops, I benefit. In fact, I've benefited quite a bit from that exchange rate.

Unfortunately, the recession has hurt me. The stock market collapse cost me, in a conservative estimate, about \$40,000.00. Moreover, the tightening of the economy means folks have less money to spend on things that are not considered necessities, and books get numbered among these. While science fiction and fantasy are the only genre not to see a reduction in sales in the wake of 9/11, publishing in general has seen negative sales growth, so there is no money to pay authors, like me, big advances. (Most of us just count ourselves lucky to still be employed, and many more are not.)

My personal feeling is that we ought to have taxes hiked, and hiked in specific areas that will enhance our lives and help pay for the war on terrorism. I listen to a lot of old radio shows from the 1940s and the last time we had a global war, there was rationing and taxes to pay for it. I realize Americans are not as dedicated as we were then (and we're a bit thicker around the middle, too), but there's not a one of us that doesn't realize that there's no such thing as a free lunch. Let's be realistic, let's get the economy going again, and let's not make our grandchildren pay for our neo-colonial adventure in Iraq.

I'd love to see some leadership in the area of the economy, but I'm seeing none. The President plotted his economic course even before 9/11 and he's not deviated one degree from it. We continue on this course, and it's off the edge of the world we go. For this reason, I will vote against the President.

## **Legislating Culture**

The President's proposal for a Constitutional amendment to prohibit same-sex unions offends me for a whole variety of reasons. First off, it will never pass, so even suggesting it is a sop to the conservative Right. It does nothing but make them feel good and deflect attention from key issues that ought to decide this election.

Second, being a historian, I remember reading about when it was illegal for blacks to marry. I remember reading about laws that prohibited mixed marriages. Those are bygone days, and for good reason. It's impossible to legislate against biology, and it's just evil to prohibit consenting adults from enjoying the rights and privileges the majority of humanity does.

Third, doesn't the government have something better to do with its time, given the war on terrorism, than worrying about what folks do in their bedrooms? Why even suggest legislation designed to make people feel miserable? Why back legislation that bars folks from being able to visit someone they love in the hospital? It seems pretty damned mean-spirited to me, and given that it will never come up for a vote or succeed, that all just gets even more magnified.

I should qualify my comments here for clarity. My sister is gay and I attended her Civil Union. I like her partner, and my sister, no matter her orientation, is still my sister. Knowing what her sexual orientation is doesn't matter—no more than it matters what anyone else's orientation is.

Regardless of my sister's situation, the bald political nature of the proposed amendment offends me. It was a divisive move that was hardly needed, since we know the conservatives weren't going anywhere. Who were they going to vote for? Ralph Nader? It was just a hand-grenade that didn't need its pin pulled, and for the inability to see that alone, I will vote against the President.

## **End of Days**

Another sticking point I have with the President and a number of folks in his administration, is that they are fundamentalist, End of Days, Christians. Many of you may not know what this means. It's simple. They believe that Lord Jesus is going to return to Earth and haul the lot of them up to Heaven with him.

Like tomorrow, the day after, tops.

Now, there are conspiracy theorists who will point to this belief as the reason the President stepped away from the Middle East peace process. In their minds, they believe that End of Days folks believe that Armageddon will begin with a war in Israel. Anything that brings that war closer to fruition is something that hastens the return of our Lord. (TV preacher Jack van Impe is priceless to watch on all of this. His shows have changed the Anti-Christ from the Soviets to someone in the

European Economic Community with the frequency others change their undershorts.)

I don't think the President had that in mind when he walked away from the peace process. I think, rather, he's operating under the sort of reasoning you find in THIS scenario: A landlord comes to you with nine cases of cold beer, a chain saw, two sledgehammers and a small back-hoe, takes you to a suburban home and says, "We're tearing it down tomorrow. Drink all you want and have fun." Pretty much anyone would say, "Where are the keys? It's Miller Time."

I understand that attitude but, dare I ask this, "What if they are wrong?" I have to say, Saint Paul thought Jesus would return in the generation after His death. Countless people thought the year 1000 AD would be His encore, and a whole bunch more folks have predicted His imminent return down through the ages. (If I had a nickel for every prediction of His return that was wrong, I could pay for the war against terrorism myself.)

If you want to take the Bible literally, then the granting of dominion over the Earth to man did not come without a price. We have responsibility for the creation. This means making it a better place, not letting corporations delay clean-up of the environment or promoting the drilling for oil in pristine wilderness areas. We've not been good stewards of the planet, but we have the means and technology to reverse the damage.

The President's willingness to treat the world as a playground someone else will clean up is another reason I will vote against him.

### **But Mike, about that drilling thing... don't we need the oil?**

No doubt about it, we ARE oil dependent. (I could be snarky and note that it's too bad we didn't decide to let Iraq pay us back for its liberation with oil revenue because with prices where they are, a barrel or two a day would about cover things.) Providing more oil would be a good thing, but that's like suggesting that the solution to being a heroin addict is just to provide more heroin. It doesn't work that way. (I could be snarky again and note that the heroin, about 70% of the world's supply, is flowing from Afghanistan, but I won't.)

Let's fund research into alternative energy sources. The state of Arizona had a program of tax incentives to encourage the purchase of and conversion to alternative-fuels vehicles. (It turned out to be a debacle because the funding was not capped, and the tax credit was a percentage of the purchase price, so folks were converting Mercedes land cruisers to hybrid vehicles and sticking the state for a huge bill.) Still, it was a step in the right direction. The simple fact is that solar cells for hot water and electrical production, with government tax encouragement, would provide a lot of relief. Ditto windmills and alt-fuels vehicles.

This government has made no moves in that direction, which is ridiculous. We're in the Middle East because that's the teat from which we get our energy. Wean the United States from it, and it can go to Hell in a hand-basket. It won't matter. Moreover, advanced fuel and energy technology would once again make the United States a world leader, would provide a boost to our economy and make the US a more pleasant place to live. I'm not seeing the down side.

This administration has not seen the upside. For that reason I will vote against the President.

## **Vietnam**

Vietnam became a huge issue for reasons that defy reason. The only thing that matters to me in the whole Vietnam discussion is clear: when each of the candidates faced being called to serve in the armed forces and experience combat, one of them went, one of them had his daddy get him into the Texas Air National Guard. (As the current joke goes, "Osama bin Laden has found a place where he's safe from combat, doesn't have to do much work, and no one can seem to find any trace of him: the Texas Air National Guard.")

As it is, I was in high school during the tail end of the Viet Nam war. I lived in Vermont. Had the war continued, I'd have been registered for the draft and would have faced fighting. I lived right near Canada, and it never crossed my mind to flee—which might mark me as stupid to some, but living here in the United States comes with some obligation. I knew that then and knew I'd not shirk my duty.

Not that I was looking forward to going to war. I would have tried for and probably gotten an educational deferment for four years. If things were still going hot then and my number got picked, or if I failed to get the exemption, I'd already figured out what I'd do. I would have enlisted in the Army and tapped flying helicopters, working in Military Intelligence or the Adjutant General's office as my MOS. (Yes, I know the rhyme, "Twinkle, twinkle, little shield, keep me off the battlefield." So I once entertained the idea of being a lawyer. Sue me.)

My point is this: I never even considered joining the Vermont Air National Guard. I knew that my duty and responsibility to the nation would be to serve it in the Army. If that meant slogging through rice patties and bleeding there, so be it. I wouldn't look forward to it, I wouldn't like it while I was there, I'd be happy to leave it, but I sure as hell wasn't going to wear a yellow stripe down my spine for the rest of my life.

And I'd have clean died of shame had any relative engineered it so I could avoid it all.

Vietnam was the wrong war at the wrong time in the wrong place for a variety of reasons, but that does nothing to diminish or tarnish the brave sacrifice made by our warriors who served there. I've read many books about it, including the citations for the Medal of Honor winners in that conflict. Those will bring tears to your eyes, and I can't thank enough those who were brave enough to accept the responsibility our nation thrust upon them to go and fight over there.

Vietnam is not an issue that will cause me to vote one way or another. Then again, if I had to be stuck in a trench with George W. Bush or John F. Kerry, my choice would be rather simple. My preference for a President is someone who has taken shots, not done them.

### **The inability to acknowledge error**

My biggest sticking point with the current administration is its inability and unwillingness to acknowledge error. This is not the same as the willingness of members of the administration, like Dick Cheney, to lie about things. It's sad to say, but I've come to expect politicians to lie or, at the very least, cloak things in weasel-words, so they can deny it later and appear to be clean.

The biggest knock against John Kerry throughout the campaign has been that he flip-flops. Aside from the fact this is propaganda and not sustained by any reading of the situations in which these accusations have been made, what we're being told here is that John Kerry is capable of changing his mind. I have to say, I like the idea that a man might make one decision, keep reading and studying an issue, decide that he was wrong, and change his mind. Who among us, save for my mother, has never been wrong? (You didn't hear this from me, but I've been known to make a mistake or two.)

There is a curious phenomenon in the circle of born-again Christians, and it is called "giving testimony." This is where an individual in a community stands up and shares with everyone else the story of his finding Jesus and accepting Him as his savior. Turn on any Christian television talk show and at one point or another you will see someone giving testimony. The audience response, over and over, is praise and acceptance for that individual.

Testimony is never questioned, it is merely accepted as truth, motivated by Jesus, to be shared with the community. There are some very well known cases, like Mike Warnke and Lauren Stratford (authors of **The Satan Seller** and **Satan's Underground** respectively) where investigative journalists have unraveled a tissue of lies to expose the individuals in question. (Mike and Lauren both claimed to have been involved in vast Satanic conspiracies during specific periods of their lives. Both made a good living traveling around and testifying in revivals until **Cornerstone** magazine revealed the truth about their stories.)

I don't mention this to suggest the President's conversion has been faked. I merely want to point out that he has been socialized to accept at face value what he's told, especially when he trusts the individuals he's speaking to. He's also not used to being questioned, or having his dictates questioned. Moreover, for him to admit he's wrong in one area would begin dominoes tumbling, and his having re-examine decisions in other areas.

I think it is rather clear that our President is not someone who delves very deeply into the realm of self-examination. He does not question his conclusions, nor does he admit there might have been a better way to do things. Given that we now know Iraq did not possess weapons of mass destruction, nor harbored Al Qaeda members, for him or the Vice President to suggest they would have done the same thing all over again is simply ridiculous.

It is one thing to believe, "My Country, right or wrong," but that clearly should not pertain to our elected officials. They are, alas, human. Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Reagan, Bush 41 and Clinton all made mistakes. On Iran-Contra, Reagan actually apologized for it. The ability to recognize a lapse of judgment and make changes to correct the damage from same is the mark of a great and intellectually vibrant human being.

I would like a great and intellectually vibrant human being in the White House. Because he does not fulfill this criteria, because he does not acknowledge mistakes nor tolerate dissenting opinions, I will vote against the President.

### **"Al Qaeda wants you to vote for Kerry."**

I've seen variations of that theme all over the place, including on a sticker on a cash register at a Radio Shack store. Please, let's be serious. That's like saying "child molesters want you to vote for Bush." Aside from the fact that no one is enough in touch with terrorists to be conducting a poll, who in Hell cares what they think? They hate the West, our culture and lifestyle. They blasted US targets during the Reagan administration and Clinton administrations. They're equal-opportunity hate mongers. If you're going to be swayed by some made-to-motivate propagandistic slogan, I'm not sure you're smart enough to be trusted with the vote.

Moreover, how do you know the terrorists aren't LYING because they're actually MORE afraid of Kerry? They're the sneaky sorts who would do that kind of thing, after all. Can't trust them, remember? In fact, given what Bush's actions are doing to swell their numbers, were I Osama bin Laden, I'd be having agents comb through Chicago graveyards registering as many folks as I could to vote for Bush.

In short, while this sort of sloganeering seems the soul of wit, it's really the brevity of intelligence and should be stamped on like a cockroach.

## **In conclusion**

This essay has gone on a long time, and I appreciate your taking the time to stick with it. There's generally nothing more boring than listening to someone justify a decision, but I hope you can see I've given it careful deliberation.

In the wake of all the above, I see John Kerry as the only alternative to George W. Bush. (Nader doesn't have a chance of winning, so using him as a protest vote is, in essence, a vote for the status quo.) I don't agree with John Kerry on everything and, having grown up in Vermont, I was high on Howard Dean in the primary. However, one plays the cards he's dealt.

What I do like about Kerry is that he's smart and willing to listen to others. I never expected him to stand up and fight Bush in the debates as he has, and that heartens me. While he's been knocked as being a Patrician, he showed a lot of shanty-Irish in the debates, and that's good as far as I'm concerned. And I'm not worried about his prosecution of the war, either. (Excepting Gulf War One, you have to go back to the McKinley administration to find a war a Republican has won, and that was the Spanish-American War in 1898. Korea and Vietnam were draws at best, and Gulf War One didn't wholly settle the issues in that area or we'd not be there today. The Great War and World War Two, on the other hand, did fine under Democratic leadership.)

I have two hopes for the above essay. It may surprise you to know the primary hope is not that you'll feel motivated to vote for Kerry, but just that you'll feel motivated to VOTE. Voting is not only a right, it is a RESPONSIBILITY. It doesn't matter if you think your vote won't count, it's your duty to express your opinion. There are lots of local issues and national candidates that will have their futures decided at the polls. While your candidate for President might not make it, your vote can decide the composition of state and national legislatures, which will act to advise on policy. Your vote is your voice, and silence is a tacit endorsement of the status quo.

Secondly, I do hope my arguments are persuasive. I hope you will decide that regime change begins at home. I have heard folks lament that even IF Kerry is elected, it will be the same-old, same-old.

Could be, but then we'd at least know we had a President who's capable of reading all you've just read, thinking on it, and making a rational decision as a result. That's more than we've got now.

Our future demands more. Vote and vote wisely.

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