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Donald B. Crawford, President

THE STAND
THE DEMOCRATS
THE CANDIDATES

The next election for president of the United States is one year away. Actually 14 months. And, already, the cacophony begins. The candidates for president from the Democratic Party, nine in number, have begun to debate the issues, and themselves. If you want to call it a debate. The critical harangue from the candidates, one after the other, so far is little more than an attack on President Bush and his policies. That seems typical of the Democratic Party, to me. They are truly reluctant to discuss the issues, to debate them.

Take Richard Gephardt, for example. Gephardt stated, in the debate, that Bush and his policies, both, were miserable failures in Iraq. Of course, Gephardt blasted Bush with great anger, the rhetoric at the highest pitch. But, nowhere, at no time did Gephardt bother to tell us precisely what was wrong with the Bush policies, what the problems were, and most importantly, Gephardt never stuck his neck out to suggest any solutions.

Take Howard Dean, for example. Dean blasted the Bush energy policies, without telling us what they were, blaming Bush for the fact that American petroleum companies, privately owned by the way, dared to purchase oil from Middle East sources, as they have done for decades, claiming that the money spent by American companies and Americans for such oil went to foster terrorism. But nowhere did this candidate indicate in his harangue what his facts were, nowhere did he indicate his sources for proving that all such monies were used at least in part for the fostering of terrorism, nowhere. Dean went on to say that America should invest in producing alternative sources of energy, the same man who is against drilling for oil in Alaska no matter how incredibly large the potential resource or the potential solution to our energy problems.

Take Hillary Clinton for example. Clinton, the senator from New York, blasted Bush for not being astute enough, in advance, to know that the electric grid systems and supply in our country were antiquated and in need of replacement. Bush, Clinton said, should have known that and should have done something about it. One of the states hardest hit was her very own, New York. The blackouts which occurred were paralyzing to the state of New York, and New York City especially. Nowhere did Senator Clinton mention, in her remarks, that she and Shumer, her fellow senator, should take responsibility for what happened, in New York, nor did she indicate that she and her fellow New York congresspersons would begin to do something about this serious problem for her adopted state, the great New York. Nowhere. It was Bush's problem, or at least it provided her the opportunity to attack Bush, without any mention of possible solutions or her creative ideas which might solve the problem. Nowhere! How pathetic.

Take Bush, for example. Bush took a stand on evil, dictatorship and terrorism and America went to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Damned if he did, by the liberals and Democrats, and damned if he didn't by the conservatives and the Republicans. Bush had the courage of his convictions, acted as he believed was right and the actions are there for all to see and evaluate. You can vote against war and against Bush for going to war. If you do, you at least know precisely why you are voting against Bush and more importantly what you are for. Many Democrats were for both wars and supported Bush, then, at the time. Now with the election nearing, it is time to take a different approach, a time for denial. That should get a hypocritical Democratic candidate nowhere.

Bush attempts to appoint fair and conservative judges to the federal bench. The Democrats stonewall the appointments and will not even allow hearings. You can vote against Bush for appointing generally conservative judges, and if you do, you know the reason why. Can anyone be really clear as to precisely why the Democrats are subverting the Democratic process and preventing the majority from voting on these judges?

Bush is against same-sex marriage. Does anyone know the position of the Democrats, clearly and definitively? Bush is for school vouchers. Bush is for the growth and modernization of the military and our defense. Bush is for continual reduction in taxes and the return wherever possible of dollars to the private sector. Bush is for the banning of partial birth abortion. Bush is for the safe and reasonable harvesting of America's natural resources. Bush is for limiting the rights of citizens and attorneys to sue for unreasonable punitive damages and the curtailing and elimination of non-economic damages and lawsuits. If you disagree with any or all of these positions, you can vote against Bush and these positions. But, at least you know why you are voting against a man or his positions. Not so with the Democrats, at least as a result of this first debate.

We should know precisely and exactly what every candidate for public office believes, the positions each will take on critical issues affecting our country and the world, and the type and kind of legislation the candidate will produce and endorse. No candidate should ever be elected on the basis of rhetoric, critique or the ability to merely identify problems without providing solutions. Positions should be clearly stated and the candidate should be held accountable if elected. If that candidate breaches the promises made or has otherwise lied or misrepresented to the American public, that candidate should be removed from office immediately. The experiment in California at the governor level is most fascinating. A politician is finally being held accountable for promises and performance. Enough, says the great state of California, is enough. It is time in America generally as in California that we the people took back our government and held accountable every single politician for their representations and performance.

The American political process, the election procedure, especially at the federal level is in shambles. I grieve for the American people. We should be entitled to robust debate regarding issues. We should know facts and figures, true and reliable. We should be involved in the framing of the issues, the dialogue and debate which ensues from those issues so that we can

make truly intelligent choices as we vote. The Republicans, in my view, are on record by word and deed in terms of what they stand for and believe. The Democrats are not! America needs the Democrats to clearly define positions, to take positions with regard to issues and to provide us, the citizenry with alternatives. America desperately needs two or more thinking, rational, intelligent parties, with differing points of view so as to stimulate dialogue, provide for an intelligent electorate and fashion policies consistent with the will of the majority to provide governance and direction for our great country. America suffers because there is almost always a lack of intelligent voting. Our political system is based on emotion, fear, misrepresentation, generality and bias. Seldom if ever do we vote on the record, facts and figures because in almost every case, we the voters simply don't know them! Any society particularly a democracy is predicated on the assumption that the structure of that society is founded upon the voting and decision-making of an intelligent, informed citizenry at work, making certain those policies and principles are enforced and implemented. In my view, we the voters have so little bottom line information, true facts and figures, that we are in many ways disenfranchised. If so, that is the death knell of our society, and us.

There are many Christians and otherwise who are passionate Democrats and believe in the Democrat Party. I deeply respect their right to do so, whether or not I agree. It is incumbent however upon every Democrat that their party be held accountable for clear and precise information, for policies that are fully explained, for precise cause and effect, for bottom line facts and figures, for stated positions, principles and beliefs, and the accountability to abide by and implement all such. With one year to go before we must again decide who will lead us, the nine candidates who would be party standard bearer and President are light years removed from such a position.

If the Democrats don't get real, and tell us really what they believe and what their positions are, really, election 2004 will be a disaster waiting to happen. We have, as Benjamin Franklin said, a republic only if we can keep it. The only way we can keep it is to be proactive citizens with a complete knowledge of who is who and what is what. If not, forget the slogan GOD BLESS AMERICA, for He won't! The only thing left for us will be the wail GOD HELP AMERICA!