

**Announcement of Candidacy Democratic Nomination for President of
the United States Cleveland City Hall Tuesday, December 12, 2006
12:00 pm**

Fear Ends Hope Begins

Kucinich, the eyes that see through the lies The voice that speaks for the people

Try this link to hear and see the Candidacy speech www.kucinich.us/node/728/play

Hon. Dennis J Kucinich

On November 7th, the people voted for a new direction for our nation. They voted for the Democrats because they expected us to end the occupation and to bring the troops home from Iraq. On October 1st Congress appropriated \$70 billion for the war in Iraq. The money is in the pipeline right now to bring the troops home. Unfortunately our Democratic leaders have already announced they will support an additional appropriation for the war of up to \$160 billion dollars. Not only are we not listening to the voters and taking steps to withdraw our forces quickly, we are actually planning to spend twice as much on the war as we did last year!

Somebody didn't get the message. And unfortunately it is the leadership of the Democratic Party and the consequences may be disastrous for our party, our nation and the world.

My home is in Cleveland. Each day I see the effect of our misplaced national priorities on my city: The number of factories and businesses, large and small, closing. My constituents and people just like them across America are losing their jobs, losing their middle class status and being pushed into poverty. Blue and white collar workers in the city and suburbs are losing their homes. They are losing their hard-earned retirement. A total of one hundred million Americans have no health care or are underinsured. Budget deficits have crippled school districts. Many cities are in financial trouble, forced to lay off vital city workers, unable to finance repairs to bridges, roads, water systems and sewer systems. The price of natural gas is rising. Huge utility rate increases are in the offing. It is getting more and more difficult for people to make ends meet.

Meanwhile millions of entrepreneurs whose ingenuity will create new jobs by bringing forth advanced clean energy technologies are being starved for capital.

I live in the same working class neighborhood in the same home I purchased thirty five years ago. My parents raised seven children and never owned a home. We lived in twenty-one different places by the time I was seventeen, including a couple of cars. I know what people go through. I have seen first hand the effects of poverty and social disorganization. I also know of the powerful strivings of the human heart. I know that with just a little help, a little encouragement, and a little money, people are capable of creating new wealth and new worlds. That creative power is part of the birthright of all Americans.

I also know what the destructive power of war does to families and to our nation.. I know what Vietnam did to this country and did to my family. I know how it divided our nation and set America apart from the world. The war in Iraq has already taken its toll on Cleveland and in communities like Cleveland across the United States. The war, tax cuts for the already privileged, and our trade policies have become a massive engine to redistribute upwards the wealth of our nation and to transfer our national wealth out of the country. Policies which divide people and fracture the social compact are inherently un-American. Our nation's very name makes of striving for unity a sacred cause.

How can we unite America around the health care needs of our people if we instead spend trillions of dollars in Iraq? How can we meet the educational needs of the children of our nation if we have money for arms build-ups, but no money for education build -ups? For example, the \$160 billion dollars which our leaders are ready to appropriate for more war is equal to three times the entire annual federal education budget.

In a period of two years the budget for the military, plus the war in Iraq, will exceed one trillion dollars. The billions we are spending in Baghdad we are borrowing from Beijing. We must end this reckless sacrifice of blood and treasure. We must stop sacrificing our dreams and the dreams of future generations of Americans to the nightmare of this war.

How can we have strong neighborhoods in our cities, with solid city services, adequate police and fire protection, if our cities are starving for tax resources because the federal government has money for war and not much else? The National Priorities Project issued a report that says that in the year 2005, twenty-nine cents of every federal tax dollar went to the military, plus another nine cents went to pay interest on borrowing to finance the military. That's 38% of federal tax income being spent for guns not butter. Contrast this with 0.3% on job training, 2% on housing, 4% on education.

Consider that our nation is now spending more money on arms than all the other countries in the world put together and you can understand why our leaders have trouble extricating ourselves from a war based on lies. As President Dwight David Eisenhower recognized, the dramatic shift of resources to grow a military industrial complex does not help protect democracy, it destroys it.

This is the moment to remember first principles, to remember why America was founded, to remember our strivings for liberty, for truth, for justice, to remember the primacy of our Constitution. This is the moment to remember the deep historic mission of the Democratic Party. We are the party of the people. We are the Party of FDR and the New Deal. We are the party of JFK and the New Frontier. We are the Party of LBJ and the Great Society. We are the party of the courage of Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, the moral power of Cesar Chavez, the daring of Robert Kennedy, the compassion of Jimmy Carter, the brilliance of Bill Clinton. We have a sacred responsibility to keep alive the spirit of our nation, to protect people's faith in not just our party, but in the political process itself.

At this moment, people's trust in government is on the line. Trust in the Democratic Party is on the line. What does it say if only one month after the voters gave us control of Congress on the issue of Iraq, that we turn around and say we will keep funding the war?

What kind of credibility will our Party have if we say we are opposed to the war, but continue to fund it?

There is still time to change the outcome. There is still time to rescue the people's confidence in the Democratic party and their trust in government. But only if someone steps forward quickly to wake the nation and tell the people, to travel to those dozens of cities like Cleveland, to go to the villages, the farms and the factories and say: "This is the moment to stop the US occupation, this is the moment to end our war against Iraq, this is the moment to bring our troops home, because the money is there to bring them home. And bring them home we must, to rebuild our cities, to invest in our children, to restore our environment, to work with the world to create new opportunities through peace.

The constituents have called me to action. Their economic future calls me to action. My country calls me to action. My conscience calls me to action. I am not going to stand by and watch thousands more of our brave young American men and women killed in Iraq or permanently injured while our leaders are ready to take action to keep the war going. We Democrats were put back in power to bring some sanity back to our nation. We are expected to take a stand. We are expected to assert our constitutional power as a co-equal branch of government. We are expected to do what we said we would do: Get out of Iraq and bring the troops home.

Clevelanders remember that twenty-eight years ago this week, I put my career on the line to protect the people's right to own a municipal electric system. They remember that I had the courage to stand up for the people, to stand against all odds and to prevail. Years later I was proven right. I know what it is like to take a stand. I know what it is like to put my career on the line. Today I am prepared to put my career on the line again to save my community and my nation from the devastating effects of more war. Therefore, I am announcing my candidacy for President of the United States, with the intention of rallying the American people to the cause of the troops in the field, to the cause of stopping more American families from suffering, to the cause of ending a deepening tragedy in Iraq, to the cause of repairing America's reputation in the world, to the cause of the dreams of people in my own neighborhood and my own city.

I fully expect to be win, because when the American people hear this clarion call for a new and true direction, this call to confirm their intent, their power, I am confident that they will respond as powerfully, as they did just one month ago, to demand that America quickly change course in Iraq and to demand a leader who will make it happen.

My campaign will be about the truth in action. It will be about the power of decisiveness, and the power of compassion which comes from an understanding of the imperative of human unity, the imperative of human security, the imperative of peace.

In 2002, I led the effort in the House of Representatives, challenging the Bush Administration's march toward war in Iraq. It was that effort which gives me hope. Because although the opposition to the authorization for war began with only a handful of members of Congress, it soon grew to 125 Democrats. Everything I said then has been proven to be true: Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11. Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction. Iraq had no intention or capability of attacking the United States. But we attacked Iraq.

Consider these facts and consider that, according to the prestigious Lancet publication, over 650,000 excess deaths have occurred in Iraq as a result of the war. What an injustice has been done to the Iraqi people. We must stop our betrayal of our own heart and work immediately to rally the world community in the cause of relieving the suffering of Iraqis. But we cannot do it as occupiers.

I ran for President in 2004, not just to challenge the war and Democratic Party policy, but to bring forth a message: Fear ends. Hope begins. My candidacy will call forth the courage of the American people to meet the challenge of terrorism without sacrificing our liberties and everything that is near and dear to us. My candidacy will inspire hope for a new America, where social, economic and political progress is grounded in work for peace.

My stand for peace is not simply being against the Iraq war. It was against all war. We have the right to defend ourselves, but our leaders have confused offense with defense. America has separated itself from the world, put itself beyond the reach of international law, We must reunite with the world. We must rally the world in the cause of human unity, in the cause of the survival of the planet facing challenges from global climate change, nuclear proliferation and from useless war.

I believe that as human beings we have evolved to the point where we can settle our differences without killing one another. This is what President Franklin Roosevelt, who knew war, meant when he spoke of our responsibility to pursue "the science of human relations." It was this thinking that inspired legislation to create a Department of Peace which seeks to meet the challenge of domestic violence, spousal abuse, child abuse, violence in the schools, racial violence, violence against gays, and to resolve conflict between police and community groups. War is not inevitable. Peace is inevitable if we are dedicated to creating new structures for peace.

Einstein once said "the significant problems we have cannot be solved at the same level of thinking with which we created them." Yet that is what we are in Washington with respect to Iraq. Even though we know that our presence in Iraq is totally wrong, we seem unable to do anything about it, except keep spending more money for the war. We must end this march of folly. Together we are going to change this and rescue our nation.

This is a moment that we need to call our Democratic leaders to courage. This is about leadership, clear vision and integrity. The people were behind us in November. They are behind us now. We must stand by our word and bring the troops home now. I am the only member of the House and the Senate running for President who has consistently voted against funding for the war, based on a principled opposition.

I was against the war then. I am against it now. A leader must have not just hindsight, but foresight. The prophet Isaiah said "Without vision, a people perish." I am stepping forth at this moment because I believe, as did Lincoln that "this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from this earth." Thank you.