

All Things Cynthia McKinney

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Cynthia McKinney
The World Didn't Wait
"elevate" Democracy Conference
October 24, 2007

It is a great pleasure for me to have been invited to participate in this Conference dedicated to democracy. I look forward to joining the international community of activists dedicated to change based on the principles of dignity, justice, self-determination, and peace for all the peoples of the world.

Everyone in this room and every participant in this Conference is here because we want peace and justice.

And these principles of peace and dignity, justice and self-determination are oftentimes pronounced as the reasons why certain policies are pursued by governments, only later do we discover that the opposite was the case. In the case of my own country, the United States, it pronounces itself a protagonist for peace -- as it makes war; a crusader for religious freedom -- as it targets for sometimes illegal and unconstitutional treatment, members of a particular faith. My country postures as a country deeply concerned about the spread of democracy -- yet denies democracy at home by systematically disfranchising poor, black, and minority voters. And finally, let me not forget to mention the incarceration rate of the U.S. My country incarcerates more people than any other country on the planet -- many of whom are innocent--while it champions its pursuit of "justice."

Many people inside the United States struggle selflessly to return our country to a position of economic vitality, Diplomatic trust, and reliability as a true champion for justice and peace.

But, from my own personal history and that of many who struggled before me, such independent thinking and confidence in the goodness of our people comes at a personal price. For while our message may ricochet around the world, the people we fight for are rarely in a position to reward such acts of courage. Yet the powers that be always seem to be able to exact their punishment. So oftentimes, where there is courage, truth, compassion, belief in the people, and a solid sense of right and wrong, there is also aloneness, vulnerability, or sometimes even deep disappointment.

I was the only Democrat to lose in the entire 2006 election cycle. The War Party Democrats needed 218 votes to pass the war-funding bill in the House. That initial war-funding bill passed exactly by 218 votes, with my replacement in Congress voting to fund the war. Had I been there, the vote would have failed; the war would not have been funded, and we'd be having a different conversation now about the prospects for peace in the world. One vote is important and my one vote -- not being there -- did make a difference.

But instead of abandoning the struggle, we come together at conferences like

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this one to commune with each other, learn from each other, give love and support to each other, recharge our batteries, and continue our work on behalf of what is right in a world currently filled with so much wrong.

Last year, I was asked by Debra Sweet to endorse the activities of World Can't Wait, the American pro-peace and pro-impeachment organization. It advocates the impeachment of George Bush because in its view, Bush is such bad news that the World Can't Wait.

I agree with them.

And so, on my last day in Congress, after 12 years of service to my constituents and my country, I offered Articles of Impeachment against President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and Secretary of State Rice.

Impeachment is America's roadmap back to dignity. Impeachment is the Constitutional way to handle an Administration that has, from the outset, violated the tenets of the U.S. Constitution. It is also a way of the people to say "No, we do not condone what has been done in our name, and we are not complicit."

The first time I felt the sting of Republican retribution and Democratic Party indifference was in 2002 when I questioned the Administration's explanation of what happened on September 11th, 2001. I am the Member of Congress who asked the simple question, "What did the Bush Administration know and when did it know it, about the tragic events of September 11th." After I was defeated in 2002, I traveled all over my country supporting the anti-war movement and informing the American people of the lies of the current Administration.

The film "American Blackout" tells the whole story of how Republicans stole two Presidential elections and of how Republicans stole two Congressional elections from me.

Well, as it turns out, the world didn't wait. And activists in the rest of the world are the people now practicing the art of effective resistance.

I guess it started in 1959 with Cuba. However, Cuba is no longer alone in its attempt to chart its own course.

In 1998, Venezuelans elected Hugo Chavez who has used oil profits to set up healthcare for all, arts programs for the children, and subsidized education, including free universities.

In 2001, the people of Cote d'Ivoire rejected dictatorship and up to today, continue to try and chart an independent course despite huge big power interference due to offshore oil reputed to be of the quality of Nigeria's.

In 2002, Brazilians sent shockwaves throughout the Americas by electing the Workers' Party Lula to become their head of state.

In 2003 Argentina elected Kirchner, 2004, Spain elected Zapatero, and India rejected the BJP politics of division. In 2005, Bolivia elected Morales; 2006, Bachelet in Chile, Correa in Ecuador, Ortega in Nicaragua were all elected, with one agenda -- to provide prosperity, independence, justice, and peace -- to the people that they represent.

And let us not forget the valiant people of Haiti who twice have had their elected President, Aristide, removed from office by means of U.S. intrigue. But in the midst of an attempt to steal the Haitian election away from Rene Preval, a friend and supporter of Aristide, the Haitian people took to the streets and demanded that their votes be counted and that the election not be stolen.

Today, Preval is the President of Haiti because the Haitian people took every step within their means to ensure that their votes and their democracy were respected. Today, even, despite a harsh occupation, the Haitian people stand strong.

"Free Trade" and Privatizations
(22 hours) (event)

- Explosivo Verde: Six Band Fundraiser for McKinney Campaign
(9 days) (event)
- Cynthia speaks to California State at Northridge
(12 days) (event)



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Recent Audio

- Cynthia on Radio Town Hall on Race and Gender in 2008 Presidential Race, excerpts
- Cynthia on Radio Town Hall on Race and Gender in 2008 Presidential Race
- Mumia Abu Jamal: McKinney offers "not just the illusion, but the reality of 'change'"
- Rich Whitney Interviewed about Illinois Primary
- Cynthia in Portland, Nov 12th, 2007

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AMERICAN CASUALTIES OF IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN	
Dead:	4,503
Wounded:	31,187
Injured:	9,984
Ill:	27,890
DoD and VA via Veterans for Common Sense (Apr 02 2008)	
warcomeshome.org a project of KPFA Radio	

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Against tremendous odds, people who have far less than most Americans have -- in terms at least of material things -- stood up and took their fates in their hands. They did what Mario Savio asked Americans to do in the 1960s. They put their bodies against the levers and the gears and the wheels of the machine and they said to the owners if you don't stop it, we will. And stop it, they did. The people of these countries stopped the machine. And I know that Americans can do it, too.

On the day before he was murdered, in his less-celebrated "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that he was happy to be living in the second half of the 20th Century because something was happening in our world. He said,

"The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled . . . whether in Johannesburg, Nairobi, Accra, or New York City, the cry is always the same: 'We want to be free.'"

Well, I can stand here nearly 40 years later and say that at the dawn of the 21st Century, "Something is happening in our world." The world's marginalized, exploited, and dispossessed are taking center stage because they have decided to defy imperial domination. They are saying that resource wars that hurt the masses and benefit the few are illegal, immoral, and just plain wrong.

If Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were with us today, I think he would be proud of the people around the world who are standing up for themselves.

I'm sure Dr. King would wonder why people in the U.S. didn't demand that their votes be counted on election days in 2000 and in 2004.

In 2000 there were approximately 2 million voters who went to the polls and thought they voted, but actually, their votes were not counted. Approximately 1 million of those were minority voters. George Bush did not win Florida by 537 votes. Approximately 97,000 blacks who went to the polls and voted had their votes invalidated because the authorities said that the ballots were "spoiled."

In 2004, the black vote, once again, was a victim of racial profiling. And again, the Republicans did it and the Democrats let them get away with it. As Talam Acey writes, the new New World Order is that you can win the election and still lose.

What is clear is that the world didn't wait for the people of the United States to take their country back. We can also point to action right here in Europe. For example, Aznar in Spain lost the election even at the most painful moment for the people of Spain. Bush's coalition of the willing crumbled as Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Hungary, Norway, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Italy, and Slovakia, in that order Portuguese, and the Norwegians pulled their troops in that order. What surprises me is that so many countries fell for the lies anyway. More importantly, what the world is showing us, is that people power is real and that if we, in the United States, fail to act, we will be the ones left far behind. Here's what the people in the U.S. have faced:

Republicans stole the 2000 Presidential election.

Then, on September 11th a grave tragedy befell our country. The American people were promised a white paper by Colin Powell stating what happened, how it happened, and who did it. We have yet to receive such a white paper, Osama bin Laden is on the FBI website, but not for September 11th!

Hot on the heels of September 11th, however, the Administration pushed through a series of draconian laws that usurp the United States Constitution and the civil liberties embodied in the Bill of Rights that make us "free," the ostensible cause of the September 11th attacks in the first place, according to the Administration story.

Then, the Administration seized the September 11th tragedy to invade and occupy Iraq while lying to the American people and the global community about why this action was necessary.

A campaign of terror ensued at home with the U.S. government targeting the Muslim community and actually rounding up innocent, law-abiding residents for interrogations. Those of all faiths, races, and ethnicities who dissented from the Administration's policies found themselves targeted for surveillance and worse. Medical records, bank records, telephone conversations, e-mails, regular mail, and more, all became subject to the government's watchful eyes. Even church sermons, environmentalists, and peace groups were monitored. The Administration spied on the American people, breaking U.S. law, and lied to them about it.

The introduction of electronic voting machines into U.S. elections inaugurated a whole new level of possible election fraud techniques. As these unreliable machines are introduced into Europe, I believe European voters must become even more vigilant for the future of their democracy.

The Administration stole the 2004 Presidential election, and immediately began warmongering against other countries it didn't like. It told us to expect war for the next generation and targeted 60 countries around the world. Its war aims include Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Iran, and North Korea. The current Administration has actually dropped bombs on the poor, defenseless people of Somalia. Ethiopia, a country with a proud heritage of never having succumbed to any colonial power is now firmly a U.S. vassal, part of the Administration's war machine against fellow Africans. Adding further insult to injury in Africa, the Administration has inaugurated its Africa Command within the Pentagon and will locate a permanent presence on the Continent thanks to the acquiescence of Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson, President of Liberia.

Interestingly, none of what I've said is a secret in the U.S. It's not on the corporate-owned media, but it is public and could be known by the masses.

When Bobby Kennedy was asked about a U.S. military strike on Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis, his response was that it was unseemly for a country the size of the United States to use military force against a small country like Cuba.

Bobby Kennedy would have been President of the United States had he not been murdered by assassin's bullets. And I'm told that Bobby Kennedy was considering Dr. King to be his Vice President, but the assassins got Dr. King, too.

Who could explain today's U.S. behavior to Bobby Kennedy or Dr. King? How do we maintain any dignity or responsibility to our children and to the world's children when we fail to exercise every tool available to us to stop the current Administration and for that matter, any future Administration that would do this in our name?

I do believe the American people voted massively in the mid-term elections for a Democratic majority in Congress in an effort to end the war, restore the Constitution, and stop the lies. Instead, the Democratic majority in Congress has funded the war, enabled the illegal spying on the American people, failed to repeal the Patriot Act and other laws that erode civil liberties in our country, and passed bellicose legislation targeting Iran.

I have signed so many online petitions, for impeachment, to not vote for any candidate who has ever voted to fund the war, but ultimately our today and tomorrow will be written by those who dare to act. As Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Dr. King, SNCC, and the Black Panthers, and the hundreds of thousands of others who forced the southern part of the United States into the 20th Century. I'm encouraging all peace loving Americans to not only register to vote and to vote, but to run for office so we all can have good people for whom to vote!

I have endorsed Cindy Sheehan, the mother who lost her son in the Iraq war, who

is now running for Congress in San Francisco against Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic Leader who took impeachment off the table and who continues to fund the war. And I might very well become a candidate for President in the United States under the Green Party banner.

The complicity of both major political parties in the global and domestic mess emanating from the United States is becoming crystal clear.

Each one of us, individually, has no choice but to become the leader we are looking for. Otherwise, we will continue to get what we've always been given: handpicked leaders who don't represent us.

We will have to change the structure of U.S. politics because changing the people, clearly, isn't enough.

I believe this becomes more possible as the people in the U.S. understand that our two parties have morphed into the War Party and the Money Party and they both are one!

Moreover, the inauguration of electronic voting machines into the election process requires vigilance on the part of us all. That approximately one million French citizens voted on electronic voting machines of questionable reliability should give all of us pause and should instruct you in Europe on the need for vigilance.

When the Presidential election was stolen in Mexico, defenders of democracy shut Mexico City down for weeks until the unrightful, new Mexican President was sworn in. After that, they formed a "parallel" government. And if Mexican defenders of democracy can do it, certainly American defenders of democracy can accomplish what we need to do, too.

For us, nothing less than the soul and character of our country are at stake. But for the world, embroiled in war, nothing less than the fate of mankind is at stake.

Thank you for hosting this Conference. Thank you for giving us the encouragement to go forth, especially in the United States, and build an uncompromised movement for dignity and justice, based on peace and love.

Thank you.

You can learn more about Cynthia McKinney at www.allthingscynthiamckinney.com.

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