

Anyone But Bush

Undercovered #37: Eyeballing the opposition.

As the 2004 Presidential elections approach, the chorus swells: "Anyone but Bush." Which of the nine Democratic presidential candidates is most electable?

I brood about this, too. But with six months until the Oregon primaries, I think the question is still who we want to elect. I'm working for Congressman Dennis Kucinich. I admire his commitment to international cooperation, hopefulness, and grassroots power: "We are the change we've been waiting for." He is also realistic: We can't solve U.S. domestic woes without reducing the Pentagon budget.

Many people I've talked to agree with Kucinich, but also with what Molly Ivins said in Eugene Saturday: "I resist supporting him because I don't want to back a loser." Kucinich hasn't raised as much money as some other candidates, and the media — including our local media — rarely mention him.

About pre-emptive war, Lieberman says, 'Some policies are best left undeclared.'

Of course! His ideas are the most challenging to the status quo. And if all the people who say, "I like Kucinich's ideas best but I don't think he can win" actually vote for him, he might have a chance.

The problem I've struggled with is this: Kucinich speaks what is in my heart and mind. But since I'm used to my ideas being outside the mainstream, I worry that he can't be elected. I've gradually realized that being unable to support the candidate I agree with is a sign of my despair, despair that comes from many political defeats and disappointments.

Enough despair! I'm working for Dennis.

Whichever candidate each of us decides to support, we don't have to settle for second-best. At least, not yet.

What does each Democratic presidential candidate think about war/peace issues? Gleaning this information from mainstream media, or even Internet sources, isn't easy. Trying to be objective, I've collected as much as possible on candidates' positions. If information is missing, that means I haven't found it yet.

• **Moseley Braun** opposed the U.S. war on Iraq; supports keeping U.S. troops there; would reduce the Pentagon budget.

• **Clark** opposed war on Iraq but cheered as U.S. troops entered Baghdad (April '03); says U.S. troops should remain in Iraq. Clark "won't tolerate" financial waste in the military. Several Internet articles describe General Clark as a war criminal for bombing civilians and using depleted uranium weapons in Kosovo.

• **Dean** opposes Pentagon cuts and supports expanding police, intelligence, and special forces; opposed the Iraq war but said he would favor unilateral action if Iraq had WMD's (January '03); and now says U.S. troops should remain in Iraq. On pre-emptive

war: "On my first day in office I will tear up the Bush doctrine and rebuild a foreign policy consistent with American values." Dean would cut one-eighth of Star Wars funding, redirecting it to international threat reduction programs; and supports Bush administration policy on Israel.

• **Edwards** has supported the current Pentagon budget, war on Iraq, keeping U.S. troops in Iraq. He received a low score of 20 percent from Peace Action for his 2002 votes on key war/peace issues.

• **Gephardt** has supported the current Pentagon budget, the war on Iraq, keeping U.S. soldiers in Iraq, and Bush administration policy on Israel. 2002 Peace Action score: 70 percent.

• **Kerry** voted for the 2004 Pentagon budget but against the recent \$87 billion addition. He supported war on Iraq with ambivalence, calling for greater U.N. involvement. He believes we must keep U.S. troops in Iraq. Kerry supports the ABM treaty and opposes


development/use of nuclear weapons and Star Wars missile defense. He backs Bush administration policy toward Israel. Kerry led the fight to study causes of war-related illnesses of 1991 Gulf War veterans, and introduced legislation to regulate U.S. arms trade. 2002 Peace Action score: 40 percent.

• **Kucinich** voted against the 2004 Pentagon budget and the \$87 million. He advocates cutting the Pentagon budget 15 percent, redirecting the money to domestic needs, and demanding accountability for \$1 trillion in misplaced Pentagon funds. He led an effort that persuaded almost two-thirds of House Democrats to vote against war with Iraq. Kucinich now wants the U.N. in Iraq and the U.S. out. He opposes pre-emptive war, use/development of nuclear weapons, and Star Wars. He introduced House bills to ban space-based weapons, and to create a Department of Peace. He supports the ABM treaty and International Criminal Court. 2002 Peace Action score: 100 percent.

• **Lieberman** voted for the 2004 Pentagon budget and strongly supported war on Iraq. About pre-emptive war, he says, "Some policies are best left undeclared." Lieberman supports Star Wars but opposes development of low-yield nuclear weapons. He strongly supports Bush administration policy towards Israel. He supports the International Criminal Court. 2002 Peace Action score: 40 percent.

• **Sharpton** opposed war on Iraq; wants U.S. troops home now; would reduce the Pentagon budget. **EW**

SOURCES: candidates' websites, www.vote-smart.org, www.politics1.com, www.presidentialcandy.com, moveon.org/pac/cands (see interviews with candidates), www.peace-action.org, www.counterpunch.org, *Beyond War 2003: Lane Co. Political Action Team (work-in-progress).*



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