

NON-STANDARD ISSUE

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Watch Out for Those Amazing Americans Abroad

CANDIL OP-ED

By Anne Jayne

Anne Jayne is the local contact person for Democrats Abroad Canada

The seven million U.S. citizens who live outside the United States may be on the verge of surprising their fellow citizens on November 2.

These U.S. citizens have sometimes been described as

There is a common refrain: This is the most important election in our lifetime.

There is deep concern among many Americans abroad about the direction that the United States has gone. There is widespread disapproval of the war in Iraq. Many Americans who live abroad say that they feel less safe because of the actions of the Bush Administration.

Americans abroad are concerned about the same issues as everyone else: the Bush Administration's record on jobs, health care, education, the environment, and the security of Social Security. Many worry about the re-instatement of the draft.

These 2004 voters who have decided to vote this year are of all political stripes: Democrats, independents, Libertarians, Greens, Naderites, and others.

Some prominent supporters of Ralph Nader in 2000 recently asked Naderites in swing states to vote for John Kerry, not because they agree with him on all issues, but because they believe that it is imperative to send George Bush back to Crawford, Texas.

Spokespeople for Republicans Abroad have said that they remain confident that they will enjoy a 3-to-1 margin in the absentee ballots. They claim that the Americans abroad who cast ballots are mostly business people temporarily posted abroad, military personnel and their families, and retired people — people who vote Republican, according to RA.

There are a couple of problems with this theory.

The first is that we've seen the emergence of an amazing, worldwide, voter registration effort.

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) played a role in this effort, through the resources they made available on their website (www.fvap.gov) and by phone (800-438-8683).

Industrious individuals and groups created websites such as TellAnAmericanToVote.com, launched in the Netherlands, and www.1morevote.org, a person-to-person voter registration drive set up by British Columbians.

Democrats Abroad mobilized members in countries

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BUSHISMS

"Had we to do it over again, we would look at the consequences of catastrophic success, being so successful so fast that an enemy that should have surrendered or been done in escaped and lived to fight another day."

— George W. Bush, telling Time magazine that he underestimated the Iraqi resistance

"Let me put it to you bluntly. In a changing world, we want more people to have control over your own life."

— George W. Bush, Annandale, Va, Aug. 9, 2004

"Then you wake up at the high school level and find out that the illiteracy level of our children are appalling."

— George W. Bush, Washington, D.C., Jan. 23, 2004

"I cut the taxes on everybody. I didn't cut them. The Congress cut them. I asked them to cut them."

— George W. Bush, Washington, D.C., Aug. 6, 2004

Design by Doug Ward

the "51st State" — even though their votes are divided among all the states and territories. Voters cast their ballots in the locality where they last resided in the U.S.

People who hold U.S. citizenship may vote in federal elections (President, Vice-President, Senate, Congress), even if they have lived outside the country for years, or for their whole lives.

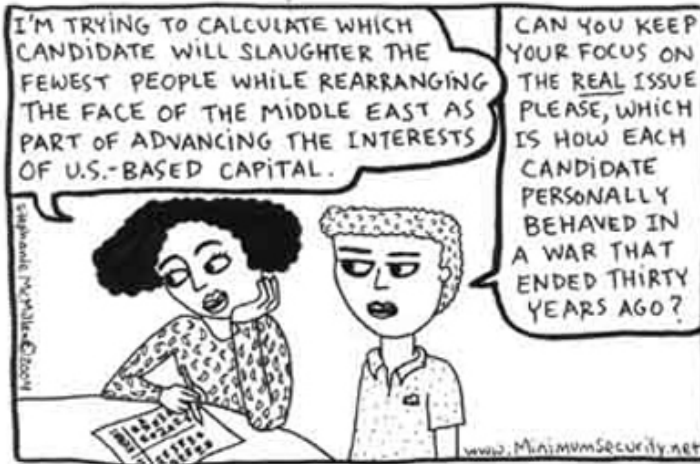
This year, many U.S. citizens have decided to register to vote after years, perhaps decades, of sitting out American elections. First time voters range in age from 18 to 80-something.

Is it possible for "Americans overseas" (or over the border, in Mexico or Canada) to influence the outcome of the election?

Bear in mind that in the 2000 Presidential election, six states were decided by fewer than 7,500 votes, including Florida (527 votes), New Mexico (366), and Wisconsin (5,710). Eleven states were decided by fewer than 50,000.

It is estimated that there are 500,000 to 700,000 U.S. citizens in Canada. The Calgary area has one of the highest concentrations of U.S. citizens in the world, with about 100,000 Americans living here.

Why are so many more U.S. citizens who live outside the U.S. registering to vote?



The Real Issue by Stephanie McMillan | www.minimumsecurity.net

WHAT WE BELIEVE

CANDIL promotes global human security through a culture of peace, active democracy and respect for international law. Our vision is global; our strategy is local.

PRINCIPLES

Necessity of International Law for Global Peace and Security

International law is essential for global peace and security, including the peace and security of Canadians. As citizens of Canada, we are expected to obey the law; we expect the same standard of behavior from our government. The government of Canada, and all Canadian political parties, must comply with the fundamental requirements, principles, and purposes of international law, and give international law decisive weight in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

Lessons from Iraq

Western policy toward Iraq has contributed to a humanitarian and human rights disaster in that country, and has violated international law, including the law of the UN Charter, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law. The errors and violations of our Iraq policy must be made explicit and used as lessons for constructive change in the direction of Canada's foreign policy, to avoid similarly destructive and costly errors in the future, both in Iraq and in other parts of the world.

Democracy and Responsible Citizenship

A critical, informed, active citizenry is a fundamental requirement of democracy. Citizens are ultimately responsible for the public policy of their government. Citizens of Canada are responsible for compliance of Canadian foreign policy with the law of the United Nations Charter, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law. Familiarity with the basic principles and purposes of international law is an indispensable part of education for responsible citizenship.

Watch out ... - continued from page 1

around the world to disseminate the message about the right to vote, and to help U.S. citizens register.

Last month, Americans Overseas for Kerry launched a new website, www.overseasvote2004.com, which made it possible for voters to register in about five minutes.

The registrations at that website have grown exponentially. More than 45,000 people have already registered. Almost 40% of the voters are from battleground states. About 5% are military personnel or their families.

While U.S. citizens in Canada have led the way in registering at overseasvote2004.com, others are now hitting the website hard, including residents of the E.U., Japan, Korea, and Thailand.

There is no way to know how many Americans abroad have registered to vote this year. The FVAP statistics give a clue: in 2000, FVAP mailed out about 250,000 application forms. By July 1, 2004, FVAP had already sent out about 350,000 forms.

The second reason that Republicans Abroad may be wrong about their support from absentee voters is that some of the people who have traditionally supported Republican candidates may vote against George Bush this time.

There are military personnel and their families who disagree about the war in Iraq. And, when they return home, they must cope with the Bush Administration's efforts to reduce benefits, including health care benefits, for veterans. Just at the time that they want to be able to count on secure access to medical care, they have reason to worry about cutbacks to health services.

There are retired people and business people with their own criticism of the Bush Administration's record in expanding the deficit, among other issues.

Nobody polls Americans who live abroad. Nobody knows how many will vote.

Watch for the results of the count of the absentee ballots on Election Day. Americans abroad might just surprise everybody.

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Ditch the Distraction in Chief

By Naomi Klein

The Nation
August 16, 2004

Last month, I reluctantly joined the Anybody But Bush camp. It was "Bush in a Box" that finally got me, a gag gift my brother gave my father on his sixty-sixth birthday. Bush

in a Box is a cardboard cutout of President 43 with a set of adhesive speech balloons featuring the usual Bushisms: "Is our children learning?" "They underestimated me"—standard-issue Bush-bashing schlock, on sale at Wal-Mart, made in Malaysia.

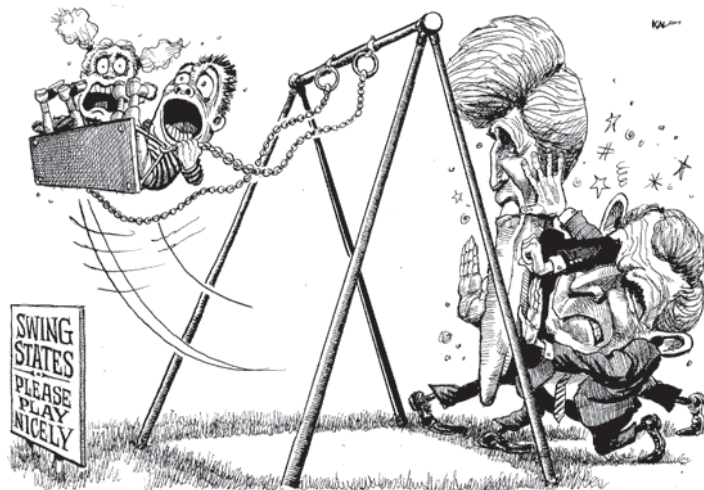
Yet Bush in a Box filled me with despair. It's not that the President is dumb, which I already knew; it's that he makes us dumb. Don't get me wrong: My brother is an exceptionally bright guy; he heads a think tank that publishes weighty policy papers on the failings of export-oriented resource extraction and the false savings of cuts to welfare. Whenever I have a question involving interest rates or currency boards, he's my first call. But Bush in a Box pretty much summarizes the level of analysis coming from the left these days. You know the line: The White House has been hijacked by a shady gang of zealots who are either insane or stupid or both. Vote Kerry and return the country to sanity.

But the zealots in Bush's White House are neither insane nor stupid nor particularly shady. Rather, they openly serve the interests of the corporations that

put them in office with bloody-minded efficiency. Their boldness stems not from the fact that they are a new breed of zealot but that the old breed finds itself in a newly unconstrained political climate.

We know this, yet there is something about George W. Bush's combination of ignorance, piety and swagger

that triggers a condition in progressives I've come to think of as Bush Blindness. When it strikes, it causes us to lose sight of everything we know about



By Kal | Baltimore Sun

Ditch the Distraction... – continued from page 2

politics, economics and history and to focus exclusively on the admittedly odd personalities of the people in the White House. Other side effects include delighting in psychologists' diagnoses of Bush's warped relationship with his father and brisk sales of Bush "dum gum"—\$1.25.

This madness has to stop, and the fastest way of doing that is to elect John Kerry, not because he will be different but because in most key areas—Iraq, the "war on drugs," Israel/Palestine, free trade, corporate taxes—he will be just as bad. The main difference will be that as Kerry pursues these brutal policies, he will come off as intelligent, sane and blissfully dull. That's why I've joined the Anybody But Bush camp: Only with a bore like Kerry at the helm will we finally be able to put an end to the presidential pathologizing and focus on the issues again.

Most Nation readers are already solidly in the Anybody But Bush camp, convinced that now is not the time to point out the similarities between the two corporate-controlled parties. I disagree: We need to face up to those disappointing similarities, and then we need to ask ourselves whether we have a better chance of fighting a corporate agenda pushed by Kerry or by Bush.

I have no illusions that the left will have "access" to a Kerry/Edwards White House. But it's worth remembering that it was under Bill Clinton that progressive movements in the West began to turn our attention to systems again: corporate globalization, even—gasp—capitalism and colonialism. We began to understand modern empire not as the purview of a single nation, no matter how powerful, but a global system of interlocking states, international institutions and corporations, an understanding that allowed us to build global networks in response, from the World Social Forum to Indymedia. Innocuous leaders who spout liberal platitudes while slashing welfare and privatizing the planet push us to better identify those systems and to build movements agile and intelligent enough to confront them. With Mr. Dum Gum out of the White House, progressives will have to get smart again, and that can only be good.

Some are arguing that Bush's extremism actually has a progressive effect because it unites the world against US empire. But a world united against the United States isn't necessarily united against imperialism. Despite their rhetoric, France and Russia opposed the invasion of Iraq because it

threatened their own plans to control Iraq's oil. With Kerry in power, European leaders will no longer be able to hide their imperial designs behind easy Bush-bashing, a development already forecast in Kerry's odious Iraq policy. Kerry argues that we need to give "our friends and allies...a meaningful voice and role in Iraqi affairs," including "fair access to the multibillion-dollar reconstruction contracts. It also means letting them be a part of putting Iraq's profitable oil industry back together." Yes, that's right: Iraq's problems will be solved with more foreign invaders, with France and Germany given a greater "voice" and a bigger share of the spoils of war. No

mention is made of Iraqis, and their right to a "meaningful voice" in the running of their own country, let alone of their right to control their oil or to get a piece of the reconstruction.

Under a Kerry government, the comforting illusion of a world united against imperial aggression will drop away, exposing the

jockeying for power that is the true face of modern empire. We'll also have to let go of the archaic idea that toppling a single man, or a Romanesque "empire," will solve all, let alone any, of our problems. Yes, it will make for more complicated politics, but it has the added benefit of being true. With Bush out of the picture, we lose the galvanizing enemy, but we get to take on the actual policies that are transforming all of our countries.

The other day, I was ranting to a friend at The Nation about Kerry's vicious support for the apartheid wall in Israel, his gratuitous attacks on Hugo Chávez in Venezuela and his abysmal record on free trade. "Yeah," he agreed sadly. "But at least he believes in evolution."

So do I—the much-needed evolution of our progressive movements. And that won't happen until we put away the fridge magnets and Bush gags and get serious. And that will only happen once we get rid of the distraction in chief.

So Anybody But Bush. And then let's get back to work.

**"Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we."
– George W. Bush,
Washington, D.C., Aug. 5/04**

As the holiday season approaches, CANDIL wants to encourage all Calgarians to buy gifts that are either locally made or fair trade. We also suggest that giving a donation to a non-profit organization in a friend's name is a great gift idea. In this season of giving, let us use our buying power to purchase things that support real development in all communities so that we give not only to our friends but to all people.

CANDIL

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NON-STANDARD ISSUE
Non-Standard Issue is a bi-monthly newsletter that expresses alternative views in hopes of broadening the minds of citizens and encouraging them to voice their opinions about democracy, peace, international law and responsible citizenship.

What you can do to become a more responsible citizen.

- 1. Educate yourself.**
Check out alternative news websites and join CANDIL or a similar group.
- 2. Contact your MP or MLA** on issues that you feel they should be addressing.
- 3. Make your voice heard!** Send your letters, commentaries, etc. to editors.

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."

– Dwight D. Eisenhower

MOVIE NIGHTS

In October, we will be showing **Counting on Democracy** by Greg Palast.

Forget the hanging chads and butterfly ballots. The Presidential election drama of 2000 is still a mystery to most Americans. Counting on Democracy investigates charges of disenfranchisement and 180,000 uncounted Florida votes cast largely by the working poor and people of colour, uncovering racial exclusion, voting rights violations and the subverting of a recount in the most contested and controversial election in U.S. history.

When: October 29 at 7 p.m.
Where: Parkdale United Church, 2919 - 8 Ave. N.W.

In November, we will be showing **Liberty Bound** by Christine Rose.

Liberty Bound takes an entertaining, tongue-in-cheek look at America's on-going struggle to keep a comfortable balance between democracy, capitalism and fascism. This is a film about courage, fear, ignorance, knowledge, propaganda, rhetoric and the amazing events that have shaped our history.

When: November 26 at 7 p.m.
Where: Parkdale United Church, 2919 - 8 Ave. N.W.

Popcorn, coffee and tea will be provided.

20th Annual Project Ploughshares Peace Fair

Join us and 20 local non-profit groups (including UNICEF, 10,000 Villages, Calgary Immigrants Women's Association, Minkha Sweaters/ Save the Children) at a holiday craft sales.

When: Nov. 20th 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Where: St. Davids United Church, 3303 Capitol Hill Cres. NW

For more info: 270-7366

The Stupid Economy
By Leader
The Guardian
Sept. 13, 2004

If George Bush was running for re-election on the basis of his stewardship of the US economy alone, he would already be packing his bags. To be blunt, the

economy's performance has been dismal by recent standards. Some of that grimness has not been Mr Bush's fault - he took office in the backwash of a calamitous financial bubble, the effects of which made the economic impact of 9/11 look like a hiccup. But little that the Bush team has done since has been effective or sensible in policy terms. The debate inside the White House appears to have been limited in the extreme, provoking Mr Bush's original choice as treasury secretary, Paul O'Neill, to describe the president as "like a blind man in a roomful of deaf people". The administration's measures have been less "it's the economy, stupid", and more "the stupid economy".

Even if we excuse Mr Bush the after-shocks of the dotcom meltdown and the disruption of 9/11, his record remains poor. His default mode of economic stimulus has been tax cuts for the wealthy, which Republican apologists shrilly declared to be engines of job creation. That has proved to be incorrect. Only a few months ago - February, in fact - the White House was predicting job growth of more than 300,000 a month. The reality has been less than half that, or 1.7M fewer jobs than the administration forecast just seven months ago. That means the labour market is standing still, with job creation barely keeping pace with US population growth.

So, if no job growth, the legacy of the Bush tax cuts has instead been a ballooning deficit thanks to the tax cuts. The projections are staggering, and makes talk of Gordon Brown facing a fiscal "black hole" seem absurd. The Congressional Budget Office forecasts a \$2,000 bn deficit between now and 2009, including a \$400 bn shortfall this year. Given

that Mr Bush came into office with a budget surplus, the figures are extraordinary: America's economy has been mortgaged for its wealthiest citizens.

Mr Bush addressed little of this during the Republican convention, instead mentioning vague and nebulous plans to encourage "ownership". As the Los Angeles Times observed, his speech "would have been more convincing if he had not actually been president for the last four years". His opponent, John Kerry, has not been much more forthcoming, but is at least concerned about the dangers of the deficit. Many of Mr Kerry's economic advisors cut their teeth in the Clinton administration, and offer the prospect of competence and wisdom - something sorely missed in Mr Bush's White House.

CANDIL UPDATE

Candil recently held a strategy meeting on Saturday September 11, 2004. It was an excellent day with lots of ideas put forth and a great review of what we've been doing this past year. Candil has organized and participated in many demonstrations, vigils and protests. We supported 3 Candil members on trips to Iraq this year to bring back information and help organize projects in Iraq. Two of our members met with the US Consul General in April to talk about the crisis in Falluja. In conjunction with Project Ploughshares we organized the Candidate debate on Missile Defence and Iraq before the federal election and much, much more!!

One of our key projects is Building Bridges. Julie Hrdlicka, the office coordinator of Candil, has been speaking in classrooms around the city and looks forward to carrying on with this as the new school year begins. She is also working with a group of homeschoolers who have an interest in social justice and environmental sustainability.

Currently Candil is raising awareness against violence with our Blue Ribbon Campaign which runs for the month of September.

One of our members, Dr. David Swann, will be running in the upcoming provincial election for the Alberta Liberal Party in the Mountain view riding.

Candil continues to support the Adopt A Town project which is raising money to help rebuild the town of Jurf-al-Sakhr in Iraq in conjunction with Life for Relief and The International Society for Peace and Human Rights.

The Canadian Peace Alliance conference takes place this November in Toronto and we are looking to send one of our members as a representative.



Not So Bad by Stephanie McMillan | www.minimumsecurity.net