

## Submerged Leader Emerges

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Al Gore addressed more than 3,000 supporters at the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall, across the green Ellipse from the White House in Washington DC on Sunday. The scene was impressive, with a peaceful, pleasant and clearly well-educated crowd winding half-way around the city-block sized building. Only two policemen were in attendance, both on bikes. They stopped to talk with supporters, and also with the only three placard-carrying dissenters stationed across from the building entrance. Obviously no one suspected trouble or unruliness at this gathering of liberals, progressives and democrats.

Mr. Gore didn't address democratic elections, and he shook his head when supporters shouted, "Gore for '04!" Instead he spoke to the crowd about "the true relationship between freedom and security."

He delineated a number of breaches of the constitution.

"...for the first time in our history, American citizens have been seized by the executive branch of government and put in prison without being charged with a crime, without having the right to a trial, without being able to see a lawyer, and without even being able to contact their families...Now if the President makes a mistake, or is given faulty information by somebody working for him, and locks up the wrong person, then it's almost impossible for that person to prove his innocence – because he can't talk to a lawyer or his family or anyone else and he doesn't even have the right to know what specific crime he is accused of committing. So a constitutional right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness that we used to think of in an old-fashioned way as "inalienable" can now be instantly stripped from any American by the President with no meaningful review by any other branch of government. How do we feel about that? Is that OK?"

Mr. Gore pointed out that the federal government can monitor websites, telephone, bank, credit and other records, even read emails without any probable cause. He said that the Patriot Act allows federal agents to "sneak and peak" into our homes, without permission and without informing us after the fact that they were there. Privacy is no longer guaranteed between attorney and client. Libraries are required to provide users reading lists when requested by the FBI.

"I want to challenge the Bush Administration's implicit assumption that we have to give up many of our traditional freedoms in order to be safe from terrorists...It makes no more sense to launch an assault on our civil liberties as the best way to get at terrorists than it did to launch an invasion of Iraq as the best way to get at Osama Bin Laden."

Mr. Gore noted the parallels between the Bush Administration's America and George Orwell's Big Brother in *1984*. "And they have done it primarily by heightening and exploiting public anxieties and apprehensions. Rather than leading with a call to courage, this Administration has chosen to lead us by inciting fear."

Mr. Gore quotes Justice Louis Brandeis, who wrote three-quarters of a century ago, "Those who won our independence understood that courage is the secret of liberty and fear only breeds repression."

"[This administration] has constantly angled for new ways to exploit the sense of crisis for partisan gain and political dominance. How Dare They!"

How did we get into this mess? They stole the election, remember? How dare they take our leader away from us? We must thank Mr. Gore for continuing to care enough about our country and its people to step forward and raise these questions against an administration that threatens opposition to its tactics with fear and repression. And we need to stand tall as we humbly request that Mr. Gore undertake the challenge of unseating this administration before they have completely gutted our nation's freedoms, environment, international reputation and constitution.

But this time, we must promise our former vice president that we will unite behind him. Many voices have risen in the years since those votes were not counted. A band of able-bodied and like-minded leaders: Dean, Kerry, Clark, Kucinich, et al, have assembled who together can represent Americans who believe in justice, honesty, peace, prosperity and freedom, and who will not allow underhanded and illegal tactics to win again. Each is a talented individual and they represent a variety of strengths. Perhaps each could share responsibility for turning our country back toward a future we can look forward to. But let all of them work together in support of Mr. Gore, as we all would have been doing were it not for an unfair intervention of the Supreme Court in election 2000. Al Gore is our chosen leader. Let us all help him take charge of a bad situation before our country crashes. Let's put integrity back in the driver's seat. Let's put Al Gore back in the White House.