

US Election Campaign: National Security and Permanent Wars. Vying to Be Toughest

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Ignoring public sentiment, both party nominees stress “national security” and face off on who’s toughest on “terrorism.” For 2009, expect more of the same. A continued right wing agenda. Bigger budgets for militarism. Police state repression for enforcement. Little attention to public needs. No end to wars and occupation. Possible new ones against Iran, Pakistan, elsewhere in Eurasia, and a resurgent confrontation with Russia.

Welcome to the future. Securing it for capital. More of the same after eight years under Bush. New policies the same as failed ones. Hopes again raised and then dashed. Repeating November 2006. Everything changed but stayed the same. New faces, same agenda. All parts interchangeable. A two party duopoly assures it. Get prepared. The new incumbent will disappoint, and if it’s John McCain consider Chalmers Johnson’s advice about a Vancouver condo for safety.

No guessing about a man who even scares some in the Pentagon. Extremists on the right advise him. He’s comfortable with a 100 year Iraq occupation. Militarism as a way of life. American boots on the ground everywhere. An enlarged military to achieve it – 150,000 more troops for starters. Endless wars. For their own rewards. Imperialism for its own sake. Colonizing everything. Committed to the most extremist Israeli – Christian Right agenda. Unilateralism. Nationalism. Patriotism’s dark side. Americanism as expansionism. Unlimited federal power. Civil liberties sacrificed for security. One-sided support for privilege. A future most Americans oppose. A man to make Cheney look like Gandhi, according to Pat Buchanan. A de facto third Bush term or worse. GW on steroids some believe. Absolute executive power. Rock hard-line. A neo-con’s neocon. Unparalleled dangers under him. No different than most dictators. No one to trust with the presidency. Think it can’t happen here. Think again.

The Obama Alternative

Many see him as change. The “Obama Moment” for The Nation magazine. “Electric” when he was nominated. A “historic candidacy.” A “new generation (with) new possibilities.” A “sea-change election.” A “stark ideological contrast.” A clear “change of course.” Progressive-driven reform. The “end of the Reagan era” if he wins. “An end of the occupation of Iraq.” Committed to “affordable healthcare for all....holding corporations and banks more accountable...empowering labor....challenging our trade policies....a social liberal.” He’ll tax the wealthy, avoid right wing judicial nominees, and launch a whole new direction for America under his leadership.

A shameful Nation magazine display that turns reality on its head and echoes its 19th

century roots. It was once unapologetic about slavery. Later failed to advocate for black and other minority rights, labor, women's suffrage and more. It championed 19th century laissez faire. Attacked the Grangers, Populists, trade unions and socialists.

In 1999, it called the US-led NATO Serbia-Kosovo aggression "humanitarian intervention." After 9/11, it backed the official explanation in spite of huge amounts of evidence debunking it. Initially supported the Afghan war. The Iraq war early on. "No evidence" the 2004 election was stolen. Attacks Hugo Chavez. In January 2006, ran a repugnant full-page anti-Muslim ad titled "Arabian Fables" claiming Palestinians are prone to violence and deception. Then in March 2006, ran an article titled "The Fight for Haiti" in which it attacked Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Called him "feared and despised," and blamed Haitians for their occupation and Washington-inflicted misery.

No surprise their editorial position would endorse a candidate and party supporting privilege over beneficial social change and ending foreign wars and occupation. They're gatekeepers and hide the truth about Democrats. Misrepresent them as offering change. Betray their readers and deceive them about a party and their multi-millionaire machine politician favorite - no populist, liberal, or for real progressive change. Just business as usual for his establishment backers picking him to lead his party because he's "safe."

Still he's called different. Less risky. Progressive. Hopeful change. A new direction. A man of the people. Anyone but Bush. The alternative to McCain. A pragmatist. A realist. Non-ideological or less so. Middle-of-the-road. A Kennedy type figure. His natural heir. Inheriting the "torch." Measured, not impulsive. Thoughtful. A good communicator. Think again. Maybe another opportunist like Kennedy was viewed and about whom his biographer, Robert Dallek, wrote: "He never said a word of importance in the Senate," and according to some never did much there either.

Even so, he shunned aggressive wars and opposed a Vietnam escalation. But 1960 was different than today's new millennium world with McCain in the wings to extend it. Would Obama be as bad or worse? Likely not. Just the lesser of two evils or what Ralph Nader calls the "evil of two lessers." No choice to settle for in his judgment. Especially when both candidates support global militarism, backing Israel and the Christian Right against Iran, unilaterally attacking Pakistan, staying in Iraq for the duration, upping the ante in Afghanistan, and risking a dangerous Eurasian confrontation with Russia.

Both conventions are over. It's Obama v. McCain, and expect the winner to disappoint like always and on what voters say matter most - ending aggressive wars and addressing long-neglected social needs, made all the worse given capitalism's global crisis and both parties' commitment to privilege.

After the Democrat convention ended, author, media activist, critic, and independent filmmaker Danny Schechter wrote: "You won't hear a call for a national crackdown on the corporate crime, fraud, and abuse that, in just the last few years, have robbed trillions of dollars from workers, investors, pension holders, taxpayers and consumers....Democrats will not shout for a payback of ill-gotten gains, to rein in executive pay, ending corporate personhood, or to demand corporate sunshine laws."

Instead of embracing change, Obama has a rogue's gallery for advisors. He's largely dismissive. Assures business as usual, and wants to prove he's toughest on national security. He's for expanding the military - for starters, 65,000 more Army troops and 27,000

more Marines along with bigger supportive budgets. He also wants more counter-insurgency and intelligence resources and funding for language and cultural skills.

His new running mate, Joe Biden, advocates larger special operations forces and a new civilian corps to respond to post-conflict emergencies worldwide. He favors “universal national service” that sounds very much like conscription, but he won’t say. He’s also a six-term senator and:

- longtime defender of privilege;
- backer of military adventurism;
- Bush’s foreign wars;
- partitioning Iraq into Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish areas;
- now critical of failure in Iraq, not the war he supports; just the way it’s run; “a deep hole” in his own words;
- eliminating “fundamentalism in Afghanistan and Pakistan;”
- confronting Russia and China;
- enlarging NATO;
- supporting Georgia over Russia;
- securing US dominance in Eurasia; and
- recommending the Saakashvili government get \$1 billion in emergency aid – for weapons and munitions, but he won’t say.

He also supports:

- a tightened Cuba embargo;
- US intervention in Darfur;
- repressive laws like the USA Patriot Act;
- tough RICO ones; and
- big business interests foremost at the expense of beneficial social change.

In the 1990s, he backed Clinton’s Balkans aggression. In a 2007 (American Jewish cable) Shalom TV interview he called Israel “the single greatest strength America has in the Middle East” and said: “I am a Zionist. You don’t have to be a Jew to be a Zionist.” AIPAC responded with praise and called him “a strong supporter of the US-Israel relationship....and the pro-Israeli community.”

He also supported anti-consumerist laws like the 2005 Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act, now hurting homeowners in trouble and facing foreclosure. Others including the 1996 Telecommunications Act. It was grand theft media. A colossal giveaway.

The loosening of ownership rules for further consolidation, and the problem of today's journalism compounded – all propaganda all the time, carefully filtered news, hundreds of irrelevant cable channels, and the reason a free and open society isn't possible. Reason also why both party candidates support it.

Reason as well why media pundits hail Obama's choice, according to Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR). USA Today called him "pragmatic." His foreign policy depth makes up for what Obama lacks. The Washington Post agreed that Biden "shores up Obama's inexperience on national security issues." The New York Times, AP, ABC News and others echo the same theme with some adding that the choice highlights Obama's weakness, and ABC's George Will saying: "When you pick a running mate to correct a defect in your resume....you underscore the defect. Now the thinness of Mr. Obama's resume is as clear as putty."

What about McCain's running mate, Sarah Palin – Alaska's (population 684,000) governor since December 4, 2006, former two-term mayor of (Anchorage suburb) Wasilla (population 9800), and before that on its City Council for four years and PTA. Another Dan Quayle – Geraldine Ferraro moment. Maybe a Tom Eagleton one. A woman only notable for having been chosen. Clearly with no qualifications for the job. Done to appease the Christian Right. A thumb-in-the-eye to other Americans.

The New York Times said her selection "astonished the political world....a little-known governor of Alaska and self-described "hockey mom" with almost no foreign policy experience." Putting a brave face on a surprise pick, The Times called her "a kindred spirit to Mr. McCain (who) play(s) especially well among evangelicals and other social conservatives, who have always viewed (McCain) warily and who have been jittery in recent weeks because of reports that (he) was considering naming a running mate who favors abortion rights."

The Times added that "Many conservatives (believe Palin) would energize them," and according to former Christian Coalition head Ralph Reed, "They're beyond ecstatic." The AP was less enthusiastic saying "In two short years (Palin) moved from small-town mayor....to the governor's office and now....the first female running mate on a Republican presidential ticket. She has more experience catching fish than dealing with foreign policy or national affairs."

No problem for the Wall Street Journal that called Palin "a surprise stroke aimed at attracting Hillary Clinton supporters (with) solid conservative positions (and a) reputation as a reformer." Its editorial page referred to "A Reform Ticket" responding to the "public want(ing) change (and that shows) Mr. McCain is serious about changing his party."

As for experience, the Journal says "Palin's credentials as an agent of reform exceed Barak Obama's....(a man who) rose through the Chicago Democratic machine without a peep of push-back....Obama slid past the kind of forces that Mrs. Palin took head on." She represents "a new generation of leaders....Mr. McCain (aims) to offer himself to voters as a reformer." With a "genuine" one in Palin, he "may have found the right idea and the right person to make his run."

More neutral observers have different views:

— about a Republican party in crisis; more than ever being run by its most extremist

elements;

- a questionable vice-presidential choice;

- a woman allied with Big Oil; favoring drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; opposing the Interior Secretary's decision to list polar bears as endangered species as it might anger the state's oil interests;

- opposes government-funded healthcare;

- up to her nomination had no stated positions on war and peace; foreign policy; the economy; "free" trade; immigration; and various other world and national issues; nor ones of public concern; now, of course, she's for permanent war, a homeland police state, ending social services, "work(ing) to expand and deepen the strategic (US - Israeli) partnership," and placing corporate interests above all others;

- supports red meat Christian Right issues - pro-life, creationism, and against gay rights and same-sex marriage;

- also an enlarged military, the death penalty, school vouchers, tough drug laws, and for churches to provide welfare services, not government;

- her lifetime NRA membership and right to bear arms;

- her ethics problem over her controversial firing of Alaska's public safety commissioner; also her attempt to remove Wasilla's librarian for refusing to ban books with views she opposes;

- her lightweight political credentials;

- her past membership (with her husband) in Alaska's Independence Party (AIP) - a right wing advocacy group favoring secession from the US in contrast with McCain's campaign slogan: "Country First;" also AIP's affiliation with the far-right Constitution Party and its extremist theocratic fascist agenda;

- in her 2006 gubernatorial campaign, supported Alaska's controversial "bridge to nowhere;" for spending hundreds of millions of dollars connecting mainland Ketchikan with its Gravina Island airport - a scheme John McCain opposed in the Senate and ridiculed in his campaign;

- the disturbing media makeover of an extremist political lightweight; giving her star treatment on TV and major magazines; highlighting post-convention rallies with crowds chanting "Sa-rah! Pa-lin;!" turning her into an instant celebrity and "main attraction for many voters "at joint campaign stops with McCain, according to AP; suggesting "McCain-Palin (may) becom(e) Palin-McCain;" and if Republicans win

- she'll be a heartbeat away from the presidency under a man, now 72, and in questionable health;

As for McCain, there's:

- a "passion gap" among conservatives for his candidacy;

- his unpredictable temperament;
- explosive temper;
- unimpressive intellect;
- questionable health;
- a lack of a coherent message and strategy;
- up and down standing in the polls;
- being noticeably uninspiring, mean-spirited, and bumbling on the stump, and
- a genius for making enemies among the faithful he needs for support.

National Security and Permanent Wars to Secure It

Defying public sentiment, both parties (and their standard-bearers) support “Global Wars on Terrorism.” But it’s unknown if either backs a draft at a time the Pentagon struggles to fill its ranks and only manages through tour extensions, high-pressure tactics, lowered standards, ignoring past criminal records, recruiting non-citizens, offering attractive reenlistment bonuses, and relying on paramilitaries to make up for shortfalls. It’s clear a “back door” one exists and that under “emergency” conditions Congress will support conscription. So will a new president.

Obama is noncommittal and about-faced on his earlier pledge for a 16 month Iraq combat troop withdrawal. He claims he “always said (he’d) listen to the commanders on the ground....that the pace of withdrawal would be dictated by the safety and security of our troops and the need to maintain security.” He also wants 10,000 more forces for Afghanistan (two additional combat brigades) to bolster our 36,000 in place. In a New York Times July 14 op-ed, he pushed for our “long-term success in Iraq” and a need to confront “Al Qaeda and the Taliban” in Afghanistan. “(O)ur first priority” he told the Veterans of Foreign Wars (on August 20) as he vies with McCain on toughness. He suggested that he’s not opposed to aggressive wars so long as they’re winnable and “strategic errors” are avoided.

In commenting on his piece, The Times cited Democrat criticism for his “shift to the political center on a variety of issues, including the Iraq war.” Others see populism on the rocks. A lurch to the right as well as war, militarism and homeland repression. It particularly turns off young voters and those comprising his base. They fear this type presidency. Its support for the status quo. Continued “Global Wars on Terrorism.” Outsized budgets to fund them – over \$1 trillion annually with everything factored in. Multi-billions more in secret add-ons. The DLC agenda. The forces of wealth and power. Wall Street and the bankers. Imperialism abroad. Selling out American workers. Neglected social needs. Rhetoric over substance, and special privilege over beneficial social change.

Then there’s redeploying from Iraq. First his about-facing on a 16 month timetable. Adding he wants many troops to remain. Permanent he won’t say, but it’s clear he’s for it. He wants “a residual (tens of thousands) force to target remnants of Al Qaeda, to protect our service members and diplomats, and to train Iraq’s Security Forces if the Iraqis make political progress.” He’s for other troops freed up to pursue American militarism globally. To advance

US strategic interests everywhere. To assert our dominance in Eurasia. To “support the people of Georgia.” To respect its “territorial integrity.” To back its NATO membership. To ignore how that angers Russia. To say Russian “aggression” has “consequences.” To sound as belligerent as McCain, and, if fact, go all out to outdo him.

The Democrat convention was scripted for him. To highlight his toughness. His embrace of aggressive wars and militarism. Allegiance to the Israeli Lobby. Homeland repression for enforcement. Supporting Wall Street and the right. Telling CNBC “I am a pro-growth, free-market guy. I love the market.” Selling out his base and supporters. Assuring once again he’ll disappoint. Using false promises, deceptive rhetoric, and bread and circuses for cover.

Presenting an illusion of democracy. Convincing some progressives to buy the charade. Suggesting elections give Americans choice. Selling Democrats as offering “change you can believe in.” Making them look toughest on “security” and Obama the right man at the right time. The new JFK.

His acceptance speech theme was quite opposite and ominous in its implications. High-sounding rhetoric for change. Hollow and empty at its core. People issues to go unaddressed. Business as usual instead. “Securing America’s Future” most of all. Wars without end. Controlling Eurasia. Confronting Russia and China. Risking armageddon for imperial gain. Militarizing America to quash dissent. Making it a de facto police state. Denver and Minneapolis-St. Paul streets heading everywhere.

Militarizing Denver and Minneapolis – A Metaphor for America and Beyond and Exposing A Two-Party Duopoly’s Dark Side

Silencing dissent. Pummeling protesters. Institutionalizing violence. It’s now de rigueur against the right to assemble, free expression, and to petition for redress of grievances. Even address them peacefully on Denver and Minneapolis-St. Paul streets. Police responded harshly.

Denver’s Rocky Mountain News writer Daniel Chacon called it “Cop and Awe” with “hundreds of heavily armed officers, (from 52 police agencies) some clad in riot gear or hanging off SUVs (saturating) Denver’s streets in unprecedented numbers; on foot, horseback, bicycles and motorcycles; armed with black batons and pepperball guns that resemble assault rifles.”

They moved quickly to isolate protesters. Formed what he called “cop sandwiches.” Targeted the Unconventional Denver protest coordinating center. Seized equipment. Destroyed materials. Made arrests. Contrived charges for justification. Arrested an ABC producer filming the “wrong” things. Working on a “Money Trail” series on influence peddling and how corporate lobbyists work. Stopped a 5000 “Iraq Veterans Against the War” march. Allowed right wing counter-demonstrators free reign on city streets.

On August 25, about 300 peaceful protesters were assaulted about a mile from Denver’s Pepsi Center. Pepper spray and balls, truncheons, and rubber bullets were used. About 100 were arrested. More followed Tuesday through Thursday. Charged with failing to disperse, obstructing public streets and areas, and throwing rocks and other projectiles. Totally false, according to independent People’s Law Project and National Lawyers Guild observers. They disputed the claims and said police instigated confrontation. Assaulted protesters with SWAT teams. Blocked and surrounded them. Brought in reinforcements and two armored vehicles.

Held them in place for 90 minutes, then began making arrests. Kept them in detention. Brought them to special “kangaroo courts.” Denied them access to counsel. Kept the press away. Turned the DNC and DHS into Gestapo. Made the nominating process a sham. Showed America to be a police state, and had powerful video images for evidence.

Working alongside police were National Guard, US Secret Service, FBI, other federal agencies, and the Pentagon:

- the US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM);
- North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD);
- US Customs and Border Protection (CBP);
- the Transportation Security Administration (TSA);
- Coast Guard; and
- various intelligence agencies operating covertly.

This for a designated DHS “National Special Security Event.” In Minneapolis as well. Intimidating. Lawless. A show of power. Overkill. Denver under siege. Minneapolis-St. Paul also. Police distributing provocative warning pamphlets. Like Chicago ’68. Planned a year in advance. Multi-millions budgeted. Big corporate funding as well. Spoiling for a fight at the least sign of disruption, peaceful or otherwise. Justified in the name of “national security.” Monitored with high-tech surveillance from secret Multi-Agency Command Centers (MACCs). Police State America – upfront and belligerent from a two-party duopoly.

Denying ACLU and various advocacy group protests, US (Colorado) District Judge Marcia Krieger (as expected) ruled that federal and Denver security plans could proceed, in spite of clear First Amendment infringements. They include denying protesters proximity to the Pepsi Center. Invesco Field for Obama’s acceptance speech. Restricting them to a so-called “free speech” zone. Making it an isolated parking lot surrounded by two black steel security fence rings. Diverting parade routes from it, and arranging for what one writer called a “Gitmo on the Platte” – referring to central Denver’s river and an empty warehouse converted to holding cells (“cages”), topped with razor wire as backup for city jails. Inside are signs warning prisoners of stun-gun use.

Absent are bathrooms, phones to call families and lawyers, or any attentiveness to detainee needs. A replay of 2000 and 2004 and the subsequent lawsuits. Similar to global justice crackdowns in Seattle, Washington, Miami, Montreal, Genoa, Prague and elsewhere. Heavy use of violence and mass arrests. All to support business as usual. Betraying the public trust. The latest in Denver and Minneapolis-St.Paul. Selling out the country to the highest bidders. Corporations buying favors. Donating millions to get them. A display of organized bribery and influence-peddling. Democrats on the take like Republicans. Each outdoing the other’s promises. Too many willing to buy them. Preparing to be fooled again in 2008. A repeat of 2000 and 2004.

Orchestrated Minneapolis-St.Paul Repression

National Lawyers Guild President Marjorie Cohn explained that it was planned months ago. That “the FBI-led Minneapolis Joint Terrorist Task Force actively recruited people to infiltrate

vegan groups and other leftist organizations and report back about their activities.” Even ran a Minneapolis City Pages piece called “Moles Wanted.” This is how Police State America works. Now on Denver and Minneapolis-St. Paul streets and neighborhoods. Heading everywhere across the country to quash dissent. Mocking the political process, a democratic America, the rule of law, and justice.

Preemptively on August 29, around the (late 9PM) dinner hour and with no warrants or bogus ones, police (in masks and black SWAT gear) broke down doors and raided the St. Paul Convergence Center with guns drawn. It’s a public gathering place and where activists’ meetings are preparing protests. Claiming to be looking for “bomb-making” materials, they ordered everyone on the floor, face down – around 50 people. They then photographed and handcuffed them. Seized laptops, hard drives, journals and political pamphlets. Held them against their will. Released them around midnight, and shut down the space due to “fire code” violations. According to City Council member Dave Thune, only Fire Department officials have that authority.

Coincidentally, raids were conducted on houses where activists are staying – bursting in the same way without cause, again with no warrants or bogus ones, and making arrests. Issuing false charges as well of “probable cause conspiracy to riot, conspiracy to commit civil disorder, and conspiracy to damage property.” Claiming items seized included “assorted edged weapons, including a machete, hatchet and several ‘throwing’ knives.” Plus a gas mask, empty glass bottles, rags, flammable liquids, an army helmet, and even “weaponized urine.”

In an August 30 statement, Ramsey County Sheriff Bob Fletcher said raids targeted the RNC Welcoming Committee – a group he called “a criminal enterprise made up of 35 self-described anarchists....intent on committing criminal acts before and during the Republican National Convention.” Specifically: “to blockade and disable delegate buses, breach venue security and injure police officers.”

Activists denied any criminal intent and called the actions “terrorism” and state-directed “violence” – a hint they said of what’s planned throughout the convention week. They were right.

Minnesota National Lawyers Guild President Bruce Nestor represents several of those arrested. He described the raids as “anticipatory” and designed to frighten people planning to be on the streets protesting. One group calls itself the “RNC Welcoming Committee.” Others are “Food Not Bombs” and “I-Witness Video,” there to videotape police violence.

They were on the streets Monday, September 1, and met by “police in riot gear (battling) hundreds of protesters with pepper spray and smoke bombs,” according to Reuters. Rubber bullets, water cannons, concussion grenades, and squad cars driving into crowds to disperse them as well. Tear gas also, according to a brief New York Times account that featured reports of “breaking windows and blocking traffic” over real issues and peaceful protests.

Over 160 were arrested, according to AP, (independent reports said around 300) and charged with street violence, vandalizing police cars, punching an officer, and trespassing. Among them, Democracy Now (DN) host Amy Goodman (charged with “obstruction” and released) and two DN producers (on felony riot charges and also released). AP photographer Matt Rourke as well (briefly and then released) for photographing police violence against protesters.

Thousands marched on the “heavily barricaded Xcel Center” demanding an end to the Iraq war and other issues like immigrant rights and the country’s need for change. It was only day one, and Gustav commanded the spotlight. St. Paul resembled an armed camp “to intimidate demonstrators and silence dissent,” according to one independent report.

New York’s WNBC reported “Violence Follows Second Day of RNC Protests.” Police targeted anti-protest marchers “outside the Republican National Convention in St. Paul.” They used flash grenades, smoke bombs and tear gas to disperse the crowd. Made arrests. Sustained violence to force thousands from the downtown area. The Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign organized the march. Its leader, Cheri Honkala, told protesters she would “march to the steps of the Xcel (Energy) Center to serve Republicans with a citizen’s arrest.” Inside, business as usual proceeded, with delegates insulated from mass public opposition to their agenda. Dismissive as well with one calling protesters “goons” and Republicans “acting like adults.”

Day three saw continued repression with more arrests and dozens charged and detained for offenses like “conspiracy to commit riot.” Independent reporters covered it and explained that convictions may mean prison terms of up to seven and a half years. Others arrested the previous weekend face charges of plotting to kidnap delegates, assaulting police officers, and airport attacks. False, an abuse of the criminal justice system and intimidation, according to Bruce Nestor who represents them. He called the charges “an effort to equate publicly stated plans to blockade traffic and disrupt the RNC” with terrorism.

The dominant media was largely silent, except for editorials like the September 2 Minneapolis Star Tribune one praising “an appropriate show of police force (against) rogue protesters who traveled to the Twin Cities for no other reason than to damage property, abuse the police and disrupt the business of the Republican National Convention.”

Inside the Exel Center, business went on as usual. Accepting her nomination, “Palin Assail(ed) Critics and “Electrifie(d) the Party,” according to The New York Times.

A final day on Thursday featured more street protests, police violence, arrests (200 according to AP and over 800 for the week), and a large late afternoon Capitol Mall anti-war rally. Twin Cities Indymedia reported that police interrupted rally speakers and “tried to provoke the audience into a confrontation. At one point the cops stormed into the center of the crowd (and) continued to intimidate the protest by surrounding the back of the stage....”

Following the rally and without a permit, protesters marched toward the Exel Center, but police stopped them violently – for over three hours with concussion grenades, smoke bombs, pepper spray, and tear gas.

Inside the Center, protesters interrupted McCain’s acceptance speech that The New York Times described as “seem(ing) low on energy, and the crowd responded less enthusiastically (than) for Mrs. Palin.” The Chicago Tribune called it “one of the quietest acceptance speeches in presidential campaign history – quiet crowd, quiet candidate, quiet rebukes of the opponent he has bombarded for months.” But the Tribune hailed it anyway. Called it “much like the candidate: calm, forceful and blunt; (highlighted) a roaring arena’s response to his call to ‘stand up, stand up, stand up and fight,’ ” and gave most of its front page to that headline, including a near-half page McCain-Palin photo after he concluded.

“Political preseason is over. Let the games begin (CNN)”

Dateline September 5. Two months to November 4. Putting it in focus after Denver and Minneapolis-St. Paul. Proving Lincoln right that "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time," but enough of them every time it counts most. November 4. Obama v. McCain. One interchangeable with the other. Differences between them are minor. Not a dime's worth to matter. A two-party duopoly assures it. Whoever wins, the outcome is certain. Voters again will lose out. Their interests will go unaddressed. Democracy will again prove fantasy. Big money runs things, so everything will change yet stay the same. The way it always works.

Democracy in America. The best that money can buy. Real change awaits a new order. One wanting America the Beautiful for everyone and not just the privileged few alone.

Stephen Lendman is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization. He lives in Chicago and can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net.

Also visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to The Global Research News Hour on RepublicBroadcasting.org Mondays from 11AM – 1PM US Central time for cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests. All programs archived for easy listening.

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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