

# Draft Zinni

By Alex Urevick-Ackelsberg

*In the United States Army you never have a party, at least most of us didn't as far as I know. You just voted for people that were strong for national security. When Bill Clinton ran in '92 and I listened to him and I had of course known of his record from Arkansas, I found him extraordinarily inspirational and I voted Democratic . . . . That's when I learned that the old myths were wrong. That it wasn't that the Republicans were tough and strong on defense and the Democrats were soft and blame America. It was really that the Republican Party had become shrill and partisan and isolationist and the Democrats were working mightily to craft a new strategy to take us into a new world.*

- Gen. Wesley Clark on why he chose to join the Democratic Party.

Like most Progressives, I'm sick of losing. Losing, however, is a symptom of much greater problems. There are structural problems—we lack both an effective and efficient party organization and the complementary structures (think tanks, a real “liberal media,” etc) to distribute our messages. We also have an inability to control our image in the minds of voters and to field candidates who embody these frames.

With that in mind, I am putting forth this suggestion: in one of the upcoming mid-term Senatorial elections we must avoid simply putting forth a candidate whom we think can win. Instead, we should begin the process of transforming the battle field. This is why I am advocating that we **Draft General Anthony Zinni (ret.) for US Senate in 2006.**

Before you ask “is Zinni even a Democrat?”

The answer is “no”. Zinni voted for Bush the first time, and has called himself a “**Lugar-Hagel-Powell**” Republican. But then again, Wesley Clark voted for Reagan and Nixon, and possibly the first Bush, yet he attempted to become the Democratic Presidential nominee in 2004. What we need to do is reframe what it means to be a Republican and a Democrat, especially when it comes to the subject of National Security.

Zinni doesn't seem like a social conservative in favor of shoving his values down other people's throats. When discussing why he thought the Bush Administration had made so many mistakes in Iraq Zinni said:

*“I have spent my life as a U.S. military man in the Caribbean, in the Far East, in Africa, in the Middle East, in Southwest Asia, and in Central Asia, in Europe, Eastern Europe. Our biggest flaw is that we never take time to understand the culture. Some things we do that make perfect sense to us do not make perfect sense in another culture.”*

This open-mindedness indicates that Zinni is not a “values voter,” but then the question is—why would this intelligent, open-minded, working class guy, who has selflessly given his life to his country, align himself with religious extremists, neoconservative fanatics, and the corporate-greed lobby? My guess is that Zinni felt that the Republicans were the stronger party on national security issues.

The most persuasive arguments that I have seen for why John Kerry lost to George W.

