

By Debra Sweet

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The World Can't Wait! Stop the Crimes of Your Government!

Last week, I posted this photo of masses of Egyptians in Tahrir Square in late January 2011 with the question, “Now do you know what we were talking about?”



Tahrir Square, Cairo, January 2011

I sent the message to tens of thousands of supporters of World Can't Wait, established in 2005 as The World Can't Wait – Drive Out the Bush Regime. The photo and one line got *a lot* of response.

Almost half the response amounted to “yes — we knew what you meant then, and we're with you!” Some people didn't recognize the photo, or guessed that I was calling for a new movement to “drive out” the current president. One, who signed the [Call to Drive out the Bush Regime](#) online in 2007,

announced she is Republican, and wanted no more mail from me.

So, for you all to whom the message was not clear, here's what that photo is about:

Early 2005 was a time when people in this country who cared about *basic justice and rights of the people* were thinking of leaving because George W. had been selected as president, again. Why should 4 more long years have to pass with him as president, when that was so clearly against the interests of people in this country, not to mention the rest of the world?

About 40,000 people signed the [Call to Drive Out the Bush Regime](#) online. Clearly, the idea was appealing. But people asked, what does "drive out" mean? Some asserted that World Can't Wait really, covertly, meant there had to be an all-out revolution to force Bush from office; that being impossible, they argued, we weren't going to succeed. Others could only conceptualize a movement utilizing the mechanism of impeachment, gaining critical mass in the Congress by winning over Democrats to lead it.

Here's what we said in the [Call to Drive Out the Bush Regime](#) :

There is a way. We are talking about something on a scale that can really make a huge change in this country and in the world. We need more than fighting Bush's outrages one at a time, constantly losing ground to the whole onslaught. We must, and can, aim to create a political situation where the Bush regime's program is repudiated, where Bush himself is driven from office, and where the whole direction he has been taking society is reversed. We, in our millions, must and can take responsibility to change the course of history.

Driving out Bush & Cheney would not have been easy. Clearly, it ended up being beyond the capacity of a great many honest, determined people who had right on our side. But the idea of a mass movement of people independent of the Republican & Democratic parties, would have begun with people taking to the streets, and staying there for a prolonged period, with growing momentum.

World Can't Wait and many anti-war leaders, including [Cindy Sheehan](#), organized for several of the Bush years to get that sort of thing started. We tried to find all those people who had been in the street, especially on [February 15, 2003](#), when 15 million around the world — including probably one million in New York City — massed against the coming invasion of Iraq. We knew that one day of protest was not enough, and also that what can happen once, could happen again.

Last week, as mass protests moved to Yemen, Jordan, Bahrain, Libya and now Wisconsin, I think a great many people are thinking more deeply about what good street protest does. It's really the *only* thing that's ever made a government take notice, back off, re-think its actions. It's the only thing that brings out the true nature of a government. And of course, yes, as in the case of Libya right now, unleash desperate brutality toward the people.

But that visible protest is a necessary factor for change.

Chris Floyd has been thinking about this. [Worldcantwait.net](#) often posts his thoughtful blog pieces from [Empire Burlesque](#). This one, [Kairos in Cairo: Seizing the Moment of Moral Courage](#) goes back to February 15, 2003, and considers what might have kept the U.S./U.K. alliance from being able to attack Iraq. It's worth reading as a whole. To whet your appetite:

What if we, like the Egyptians, had gotten in the way of business as usual, and brought more and more pressure to bear on the system, forcing the issue of aggressive war on the public consciousness, unavoidably, day after day — and by this, as in Egypt, forcing officials of the system to declare where they stood?

So, where do we stand now?