

## *A Convention of Mass Deception*

Kenneth R. "Ken" Plum

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I did not write about the Democratic National Convention. There was not much to say. The nominees had been decided months before. A clear message to voters was not forthcoming. Senator Kerry would have done better to have shortened his acceptance speech rather than racing through it to fit the national television timeframe. Ho-hum!

I cannot say enough about the Republican National Convention; it was the greatest effort at mass deception I have ever witnessed. Does Karl Rove really believe he can keep the American people fooled until November?

It was bad enough to politicize September 11 by staging the Convention in New York City. But to use the brave heroism of the police, firefighters, and people to cover up the failures of the Bush administration gets to be too much.

To listen to President Bush and other convention speakers, one could believe that we invaded Iraq and put Saddam Hussein in prison because he attacked the World Trade Center. Did you hear any mention of "weapons of mass destruction" at the convention? Or did Osama bin Laden's name ever come up?

A failed presidency marked by record-level national debt and job losses hides behind a tragedy like 9/11 to divert attention from the shortcomings of the Bush administration.

The keynote speech by Senator Zell Miller captured the essence of the convention. We may learn someday what made Senator Miller so angry that he would tarnish an otherwise distinguished career with a speech filled with lies, distortions, and half-truths. Did Senator Miller really believe that no one would know that the weapons systems Senator Kerry voted against were also opposed by President George H. W. Bush and then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney? And what happened in the last several years to have Senator Miller's earlier praise of John Kerry as "one of this nation's authentic heroes, one of this party's best-known and greatest leaders – and a good friend" turn to such utter disdain?

Former President Jimmy Carter wrote to Miller recently to express his discomfort "in seeing that you have chosen the rich over the poor, unilateral preemptive war over a strong nation united with others for peace, bias and distortions over the truth, and the political technique of personal character assassination as a way to win election or to garner a few moments of applause."

For conventioners to wear Band-Aids to mock the wartime wounds of John Kerry whose service of distinction in Vietnam was rewarded with several medals by the United States government and to nominate as their candidate a person with a dubious National Guard record and a running mate with five military deferments was the ultimate display of hypocrisy. Ugh!

An incumbent President should run on his record of service. But George W. Bush runs on the flag, while his henchmen set out to destroy his opponent with whatever deception, lies, or distortions that are needed.

Regular readers of this newspaper will note that one of our local Republican leaders, in a pre-convention commentary, called for "Civil Discourse, Please" as we entered the presidential campaign season, complaining about "self-appointed arbiters of political correctness" who remove yard signs, behave rudely to campaign volunteers, and exhibit "intolerance and bigotry" to their fellow citizens during a campaign. Indeed.

America deserves better!