Powell liked to have his way—and sometimes he played rough to get it. Some called the Olympic torch threat self-centered, childish, an embarrassment. Yes. Sure. Exactly. And it was bloody marvelous, too.

Not only did the power play illuminate Powell’s character, but it was the kind of leadership we miss so much in local politics these days. Strong and uncompromising.

Of course, Powell was no T.J. Pendergast and no one questioned his honesty or accused him of accepting a payoff. But in his way, he was as tough as Boss Tom, a rarity in an era when most local politicos would rather get along than get their way for the benefit of the community.

There are a lot of wimps out there. I’d like to thank God if Sylvester Powell Jr. had been mayor of Kansas City rather than Missour. All these years, there’d have been a whole lot less hand-wringing downtown.

Cantankerous, shrewd, arrogant and big-hearted, that was Powell. He insisted on building a Cadillac of a community center for his constituents. And he saw to it that he knew was on it.

I once labeled Powell Mission’s “mayor for life.” He was that. Thirty-five of the last 47 years, he was Mission’s chief executive. Critics derided his overbearing style. But when he died Wednesday at the age of 82, few residents of his tidy little town had called anyone else mayor.

By the way, when the Olympic torch came through here this year, I noticed that the route through Johnson County came nowhere near the Mission city limits. Probably just a coincidence.

PEACE AND NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: A CALL TO ACTION

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, in this time of national crisis, it is important for all those who love our country to speak out. I offer these thoughts as a spirit of reconciliation to protect our precious world from widening war and from stumbling into a nuclear catastrophe. The climate for conflict has intensified, with the struggle between Pakistan and India, the China-Taiwan tug of war, and the increased bloodshed between Israel and the Palestinians.

United States’ troop deployments in the Philippines, Yemen, Georgia, Columbia and Indonesia create new possibilities for expanded war. An invasion of Iraq is planned. The recent disclosure that Russia, China, Iraq, Iran, Syria, North Korea, and Libya are considered by the United States as possible targets for nuclear attack catalyzes potential conflicts everywhere.

These crucial political decisions promoting increased military actions, plus a new nuclear first-use policy, are occurring without the consent of the American people, without public debate, without public hearings, without public votes. The President is taking Congress’s approval of responding to the Sept. 11 terrorists as a license to flirt with nuclear war.

“Politics ought to stay out of fighting a war,” the President has quoted as saying on March 13th 2002. Yet Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution explicitly requires that Congress take responsibility when decisions come to declaring war. This President is very popular, according to the polls. But polls are not a substitute for democratic process. Attributing a negative connotation here to politics or dismissing constitutionally mandated congressional oversight belies reality.

Spending $400 billion a year for defense is a political decision. Committing troops abroad is a political decision. War is a political decision.

When men and women die on the battlefield that is the result of a political decision. The use of our weapons, which end the lives of millions, is a profound political decision. In a monarchy there need be no political decisions.

In a democracy, all decisions are political, in that they derive from the consent of the governed.

In a democracy, budgetary military and national objectives must be subordinate to the political process. Before we celebrate an imperial presidency, let it be said that the lack of free and open political process, the lack of free and open political dissent can be fatal in a democracy.

We have reached a moment in our country’s history where it is urgent that people everywhere stand up as president of his or her own life, to protect the peace of the nation and world within and without.

We should speak out and caution leaders who generate fear through talk of the endless war or the final conflict.

We should appeal to our leaders to consider their own beliefs and values, and how their ideas are reshaping consciousness and can have an adverse effect on our nation.

Because when one person thinks: fight! he or she finds a fight. One faction thinks: war! and starts a war. One nation, thinks: nuclear! and approaches the abyss.

Neither individuals nor nations exist in a vacuum, which is why we have a serious responsibility for each other in this world. It is also urgent that we find those places of war in our own lives, and begin healing the world through healing ourselves. Each of us is a citizen of a common planet, bound to a common destiny. So connected are we, that each of us has the power to be the eyes of the world, the voice of the world, the conscience of the world, or the end of the world. And as each one of us chooses, so becomes the world. Each of us is architect of this world.

Our thoughts, the concepts. Our words, the designs. Our deeds, the bricks and mortar of our daily lives. Which is why we should always take care to regard the power of our thoughts and words, and the commands they send into action through the worlds.

Some of our leaders have been thinking and talking about nuclear war. In the past week there has been much news about a planning document which describes how and when America might wage nuclear war. The Nuclear Posture Review recently released to the media by the government:

1. Assumes that the United States has the right to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike.
2. Equates nuclear weapons with conventional weapons.
3. Attempts to minimize the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.
4. Promotes nuclear response to a chemical or biological attack.

Some dismiss this review as routine government planning. But it becomes ominous when taken in the context of a war on terrorism, which keeps expanding its boundaries, rhetorically and literally.

The President equates the “war on terrorism” with World War II. He expresses a desire to have the nuclear option “on the table.” He unilaterally withdraws from the ABM treaty. He seeks $8.9 billion to fund deployment of a missile shield. He institutes, without congressional knowledge, a shadow government in a bunker outside our nation’s Capitol. He tries to pass off as arms reduction, the storage of, instead of the elimination of, nuclear weapons.

Two generations ago we lived with nuclear nightmares. We feared and hated the Russians who feared and hated us. We feared and hated the “godless,” attorneys of communism. In our schools, we dutifully put our head between our legs and practiced duck-and-cover drills. In our nightmares, we saw the long, slow arc of a Soviet missile flash into our very neighborhood.

We got down on our knees and prayed for peace. We surveyed, wide eyed, pictures of the destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. We supported the elimination of all nuclear weapons. We knew that if you “nuked” others you “nuked” yourself.

The splitting of the atom for destructive purposes admits a split consciousness, the compartmentalized thinking of Us vs. Them, the dichotomized thinking which spins polarities and leads to war. The proposed use of nuclear weapons, pollutes the psyche with the arrogance of infinite power. It creates delusions of domination of matter and space.

It is dehumanizing through its calculations of military casualties. We become doomsayers and sowers who invite a world descending, disintegrating into a nuclear disaster. With a world at risk, we must find the bombs in our own lives and disarm them. We must listen to that quiet inner voice which counsels that the survival of all is achieved through the unity of all.

The same powerful humanity expressed by any one of us expresses itself through each of us. We must overcome our fear of each other, by seeking out the humanity within each of us. The human heart contains every possibility of race, creed, language, religion, and politics. We are one in our commonalities. Must we always fear our differences? We can overcome our fears by not feeding our fears with more war and nuclear confrontations. We must ask our leaders to unify us in courage.

We need to create a new, clear vision of a world as one. A new, clear vision of people living together. A new, clear vision with the teaching of non-violence, nonviolent intervention, and mediation.
A new, clear vision where people can live in harmony within their families, their communities and within themselves. A new clear vision of peaceful coexistence in a world of tolerance.

At this moment of peril we must move from paralysis of fear. This is a call to action to replace war with expanded peace. This is a call for action to place the very survival of this planet on the agenda of all people, everywhere. As citizens of a common planet, we have an obligation to ourselves and our posterity. We must demand that our nation and all nations bring or will bring them into action.

We need web sites dedicated to becoming more creative. We need web sites dedicated to becoming more creative. We need web sites dedicated to becoming more creative. We need to communicate with each other the ways in which we work in our communities to make this a more peaceful world. I welcome your ideas. We can share our thoughts and discuss ways in which we have brought or will bring them into action.

Now is the time to think, to take action and use our talents and abilities to create peace: in our families, in our block clubs, in our neighborhoods, in our places of worship, in our schools and universities, in our labor halls, in our parent-teacher organizations.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I and my fellow colleagues are introducing legislation today because the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has not sufficiently proven to Congress that they can fix their organization on their own, and because they are continually being plagued by the same problems year in and year out. We are offering H.R. 4009 because we believe accountability is integral to any organization.

The INS has been inept, irresponsible and deficient in their ability to the performance of their duties. This bill will make the entire organization responsible, from the highest level down to the entry-level employee, by taking away restrictions on dismissing INS employees and placing them in the same category as FBI employees. This bill will also make permanent the authority of the Attorney General to remove, suspend, and impose other disciplinary actions on the employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). We are introducing this legislation in direct response to a hearing that was held on March 19, 2002 in the Judiciary Committee.

During the hearing, Commissioner Ziglar accepted responsibility for his Agency’s action, or non-action. However, I am not confident that this will be the last time we will come before the Immigration and Claims Subcommittee for his Agency’s mistakes.

My legislation will give the Department of Justice and the INS the proper tools to promote accountability. I believe it is a good first step on a long journey towards INS reform.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JOHN WOODARD

HON. SCOTT McINNIS
OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 20, 2002

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I pay tribute today to Mr. John Woodard, an incredible man, who recently passed away at the age of 76. John was loved by each and every person whose life he touched, and he will be sorely missed.