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Special Event

Green Party Officially Nominates Ralph Nader as Their Presidential Candidate

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GENE RANDALL, CNN ANCHOR: Welcome back. I'm Gene Randall in Washington.

We're going once again at Denver, Colorado, where the Green Party has been meeting in a convention this weekend. They have just nominated Ralph Nader, the consumer advocate, as their presidential candidate once again. He says he'll wage a vigorous campaign this year, unlike the one he waged four years ago. It was no surprise to anyone Mr. Nader got the nomination on the first ballot by the Green Party.

With me in the studio is Jim Warren, the Washington bureau chief of the "Chicago Tribune," who's been writing about Ralph Nader lately. And I guess we'll wait to talk with Jim while Mr. Nader makes his acceptance speech.

RALPH NADER, GREEN PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE:
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much.

And none of this would have been possible without people in this room and all over the country, the stimulation to the campaign by various candidates in the primary season here. And I want to really express my appreciation for a lot of unsung categories of citizen action: organizers, canvassers, petitioners, our great staff in Washington, and the one that's building up around the country, who are working enormous hours with incredible dedication; so much so that I have to tell them to go home at the end of the day.

On behalf of all Americans who seek a new direction, who yearn for a new birth of freedom to build the just society; who see justice as the great work of human beings on Earth; who understand that community and human fulfillment are mutually self-enforcing; who respect the urgent necessity to wage peace, to wage peace, to protect the environment, to end poverty, and to preserve values of the spirit for future generations; who wish to build a deep democracy by working hard for a regenerative, progressive politics.

To all these citizens, and the Green vanguard, I welcome and am honored to accept your nomination for president of the United States.

(APPLAUSE)

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The Green Party stands for a nation and a world that consciously advances the practice of this deep democracy, a deep democracy that facilitates people's best efforts to achieve social justice; a sustainable and bountiful environment; and an end to systematic bigotry and discrimination against people just because they're different. Green goals place community, and community and self-reliance, over dependency on ever-larger and more absentee giant corporations, with their technology, and capital, and influence over so many governments and government policies.

Green goals aim at preserving the commonwealth of assets that the people of the United States already own, so that people, not big business, control what they own; and use these vast resources on the public lands, and the public airways, and trillions of worker pension dollars; to achieve healthier environments, healthier people; and to establish a trustee-ship for these resources on behalf of future generations.

(APPLAUSE)

These goals are not just Green goals. If we get down to the level of everyday life, they're also goals held by many authentic conservatives, not corporatists, authentic conservatives. Don't conservatives, in contrast to corporatists, want movement toward a safe environment where their children can breath clear air and drink clean water. Don't they want to end corporate welfare, the diversion of their tax dollars to undeserving large corporations. Don't they want to oppose and do something about the commercialization of childhood?

AUDIENCE: Yes!

NADER: Don't conservatives also want a voice to achieve a fair marketplace, one that responds to their own health needs and the integrity of their own savings. Let us not, in this campaign, prejudge any voters, for Green values are majoritarian values.

(APPLAUSE)

They're more than that. Green values respect all peoples and all strivings. They give greater rights to all voters, workers, individual tax payers, and consumers. And as with their right of free speech -- and this is central -- we may not agree with others, but we will defend their right to free speech as strongly as we do for ourselves.

(APPLAUSE)

And that ultimate Green value is the value of universality, respecting all people's rights to participate in power, to shape their own communities, countries, world. Earlier this year, I decided to seek your nomination because the obstacles blocking ready-made solutions -- and this country has far more problems than it deserves and far more solutions than it applies -- the obstacles...

(APPLAUSE)

... the obstacles to our society's injustices just have to be overcome. Feelings of powerlessness and the withdraw of massive numbers of Americans from both civic and political arenas are deeply troubling to all of us. This situation has to be addressed by a fresh political movement, one that arises from the citizens, laborers, resources, and dreams, in that order; dreams about what America could become at long last; the worsening concentration of global corporate power and its enormous manifestations in concentrating political

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power to serve them, has turned that government, their, our government here, very frequently against their own peoples, denying these people their sovereignty to shape their own future.

Again and again, the will of the people has been thwarted in the will -- and the voice of the people to protect their interests and to protest has been muted. In the past, citizens who had participated in this country's social justice movements faced deep concentration of power and overcame them. It's always good to dwell a little bit on the past, because it gives motivation. The sources of civic motivation come very often from the heroics of our forbearers.

Common themes occur from the revolution of 1776 against King George III's empire; to the anti-slavery drives and the women suffrage movements of the 19th century; to the farmers' revolt against the big banks and the big insurance companies and big railroads that began in the late 19th century; to the trade unions, civil rights, environmental and consumer protection initiatives of the 20th century; culminating in the demands for equity by Americans who are discriminated against according -- discriminated against due to their race, gender, creed, tribal status, class, disability, or sexual preference.

What do all these have in common? All these movements took on excessive power, pressed for relinquishment or sharing of this power, despite vigorous opposition by elements of the dominant business community. Many years were lost to the resolution of these injustices before justice began to prevail and corporate power receded. However, when citizens won and Tory merchants in the Revolutionary War lost -- when citizens won and content slave-holders lost, and corporations were compelled to share that power with the people they oppressed or excluded, America was a better place as a result.

America became more beautiful. Moreover, the companies behaved better, and in the irony of our political economy, actually prospered more. And this is really the theme that we need to emphasize as we go out around the country in this next few months: that the shift of power is extremely critical to a democratic society. And Louis Brandeis (ph) said it best in 1941, justice of the Supreme Court. He said -- quote -- "We can have a democratic society, or we can have the concentration of great wealth in the hands of the few. We cannot have both" -- unquote.

(APPLAUSE)

Over the past 20 years, starting around 1979, we have seen the resurgence of big business power, after having to give up a little in the 1960s and 70s to the various populous movements, such as consumer, environmental, human rights, civil rights. This power has generated its own brand of wreckage, propaganda, and ultimatums on American labor, consumerists, taxpayers, and most generically, American voters. Big business has been colliding with American democracy, and American democracy has been losing on all too many fronts.

The results of this democracy gap are everywhere to be observed by those who suffer these results, and by those who employ people's yardsticks to measure the quality of the economy; not corporate yardsticks, people yardsticks.

RANDALL: In Denver, consumer advocate Ralph Nader once again accepting the presidential nomination of the Green Party.

Jim Warren of the "Chicago Tribune" is with me.

Jim, what, in your view, will it take for this candidacy to have more than marginal appeal in this political year?

JIM WARREN, "CHICAGO TRIBUNE": First of foremost, people have to agree with him that there's not a dime's worth of difference between Bush and Gore. He also then has to actively campaign, something he did not do, Gene, four years ago. He's got to get the money, which he did not do four years ago, to get TV ads up so people can hear this anti-corporate, pro-environment, anti-global trade message. And I think in the fall, he's got to get onto the platform with Bush and Gore in the presidential debates.

Jim Warren, thanks very much.

I'm Gene Randall in Washington.

"WORLDVIEW" is next.

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