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The 2nd debate's winner: Jim Lehrer (for struggling to find a difference)

Last night's Agree-A-Thon showed that Gore & Bush are like Coke & Pepsi

WASHINGTON, DC — After watching George W. Bush and Al Gore discuss policy issues in their second presidential debate on Wednesday, the Libertarian Party has declared a clear winner: Moderator Jim Lehrer.

"Three cheers for Jim Lehrer," said the party's National Director Steve Dasbach. "Time and time again, the moderator challenged Bush and Gore to explain how their policies differed with one another during this 90-minute Agree-A-Thon.

"But Lehrer's challenges drove home the point that trying to find a difference between Bush and Gore is like trying to find a difference between Coke and Pepsi."

Take just the following two topics, Dasbach said.

■ **The Middle East conflict.** "Both unleashed cookie-cutter answers about wanting the U.S. to serve as an 'honest broker' — spurring Lehrer to ask: 'Is there any difference?'"

"Where was the candidate with the courage to say: The real victims in the Middle East conflict are American taxpayers — who have been forced to fork over \$5 billion a year in foreign aid to Israel and the Arab nations, and \$150 billion over the past three decades.

"That money has purchased one thing: More war, as the current killings in the West Bank demonstrate. The expensive and obvious lesson is that foreign aid and U.S. interventionism, like other government programs, simply don't work."

■ **Gun control.** "Both Bush and Gore unholstered their so-called solutions: Background checks for gun buyers, taxpayer-financed trigger locks, enforcing the stratospheric number of gun control laws, and 'keeping guns out of the hands of kids.' "

"And again Lehrer had to hound them to reveal a difference: 'Back to the question about the differences on gun control,' he said. 'What are they, governor?'"

"Where was the candidate to say: The solution isn't to enforce gun laws, it's to start repealing them — and restoring your right to defend yourself from murderers and rapists."

**Throughout the entire debate, Bush and Gore sounded like
"a couple of pet shop parrots," said Dasbach.**

"The candidates mimicked each other's proposals for more government involvement in prescription drug coverage, in running the school system, in fighting racial discrimination, and countless other issues," he said. "They disagreed only about some small details, and about the size of their modest tax cuts.

"By the end of the so-called debate, Jim Lehrer and tens of millions of other Americans were wondering: Aren't the two candidates in a debate supposed to, well . . . *debate?*"

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