

Edward E. Clark

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To my friends, supporters, and potential supporters:

I firmly believe that this time period - late spring, six months before the November election - is the turning point in my campaign.

I am very conscious of the fact that Carter, Reagan, and now John Anderson are getting the lion's share of the news coverage, voter attention, and glitter while my campaign is slugging it out in the trenches over far less glamorous matters such as ballot status and organization-building.

I am keenly aware of the challenge which this situation presents to Libertarians, who want so much to see this campaign explode into public view, and who sometimes must become frustrated with the inequities of today's politics.

Let's look at the present political situation. On the Republican side, Ronald Reagan appears to be assured of the nomination. He has a wide appeal to a certain constituency - but he is anathema to other voters in at least equal numbers.

On the Democratic side, Jimmy Carter is well ahead of Senator Kennedy, although a Kennedy upset victory can't be entirely ruled out. Repeatedly, however, polls have shown Carter's support to be extremely "soft," motivated primarily by antipathy to Kennedy rather than any real affinity for Carter himself.

And now John Anderson, the maverick Republican Congressman, is entering the presidential race as an Independent. I'll have more to say about Anderson in a moment.

Where do the Clark for President campaign and the Libertarian Party fit into this scenario?

Before I won the Libertarian nomination, I listed several major goals for my campaign to achieve. They included:

- * Building a Three Party System in America
- * Winning a vote total that was equal to "balance of

power" status for the Libertarian party

- * Developing a strong, permanent Libertarian organization all over the country
- * Establishing Libertarian solutions to problems as credible, thoughtful, workable, and humane

These goals haven't changed.

In fact, six months before the election, these goals appear to be more realistic and reachable than ever before.

I'd like to recap what we've achieved since my nomination last September.

My campaign has already attracted more major media coverage than the sum total of all national Libertarian activities prior to my nomination. Respected commentators have begun to call for my inclusion in the presidential debates. Interviews with newspaper, radio, and television reporters are a daily occurrence.

Our progress toward ballot status in all 50 states continues unchecked. Total nationwide ballot status will be a virtually unprecedented feat, one that will be positive proof of our strength and permanence.

Libertarian Party organizations in every state are growing explosively. Perhaps most gratifying is the progress being made in states where we had only small and weak organizations just a few months ago. The decision to pursue nationwide ballot status has resulted in a huge influx of activity, interest, new membership, and financial contributions, particularly in those states where our organizations had been sketchy.

Finally, our national opinion survey - taken by Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, N.J. - shows a truly impressive potential for support of my campaign.

We found a surprisingly high degree of agreement with Libertarian positions on such issues as inflation, Social Security, foreign policy, and defense spending.

In addition, a remarkably high percentage of people are not only disillusioned with Republicans and Democrats, but are willing actively to consider and support a new political party if they agree with its basic positions.

There's one more particularly encouraging piece of data in

the survey, and it should be considered in light of John Anderson's Independent candidacy.

For the survey showed that a third party candidate whose principal issue positions were much lower taxes and much less interference in the affairs of other nations would attract the favorable attention of nearly half of the electorate.

Much lower taxes and much less foreign intervention. These are issues which only Libertarians can present compellingly and knowledgeably. This is a combination which neither Reagan, Carter, nor Anderson can touch!

The fact is, John Anderson is a centrist politician who, in some ways, combines the worst of both Reagan and Carter. His positions are explicitly pro-government and pro-intervention and his presentation of them has been described - accurately, I think - as "sanctimonious."

I needn't go to great lengths criticizing Anderson, because I think that he himself will make it abundantly clear that his candidacy is not the new alternative that millions of voters seek - an alternative with the promise of freedom from continued government control over all aspects of our lives.

I don't mean to say that Anderson's candidacy hasn't affected our prospects this year.

His claim to be the "difference" which will have mass appeal to disaffected voters has diverted considerable attention that could have been ours. Many people are instinctively attracted to Anderson because he is a third choice, without having taken the time to examine his positions and ideas.

Yet, I believe that any negative impact on my campaign by the Anderson candidacy can be more than offset by its positive effects. All of the attention that has been lavished on Anderson thus far has worked to loosen the grip of the Two Party monopoly in the United States, and to make voters aware that there are more choices available to them than just the Democrats and Republicans. A political system which is perceived as "wide open" can only benefit us.

The Anderson candidacy has sensitized the news media and the voters to the challenge of gaining ballot status for insurgent parties and candidates. My name is certain to be listed on more state ballots than his - a point which the news media can't fail to recognize.

Anderson is a one-man show without a party structure behind him. His campaign, regardless of the results, will leave nothing

for the future. My campaign, on the other hand, will build strong grassroots organizations, with literally hundreds of Libertarian candidates running for office this year alone. Again, our ability to build a permanent foundation for a third major party - in sharp contrast to Anderson - can't fail to be noticed by political observers and opinion leaders.

Finally, Anderson's candidacy will sharpen the focus on the real fundamental issue in American society: the battle between freedom and control, between principle and expediency, between liberty and power. Anderson is merely one more voice on the side of control, expediency, and power. But the Libertarian campaign - for the presidency and for hundreds of other offices - remains the sole political voice for individual rights versus the power of the State.

Let me remind you of the results of our opinion survey. Nearly half of the respondents expressed a potential willingness to vote for a third party candidate whose major positions were for much lower taxes and much less foreign intervention. Who among the trio of Carter, Reagan, and Anderson is likely to strike that chord?

We Libertarians must remember that our ideas are right and they will be heard. The goals of my campaign haven't changed, and they're being achieved day by day. The opportunities of this campaign haven't changed - in fact, they've been heightened.

When our television and radio ads start to air - when more and more serious, in-depth news stories like the ones I've enclosed start to appear - when voters become fed up with the three-way rehash of tired, unprincipled government pseudo-solutions they are offered ... then the real alternative, the Libertarian alternative, will emerge clearly and unmistakably on the national political scene.

It is now, at this turning point in the campaign, that we must all redouble our efforts toward the ultimate success of the campaign and of the Libertarian movement. Our goals and opportunities can be realized and exceeded if we take full advantage of our potential.

I want to ask all of you, as individual Libertarians, to make several specific commitments to yourselves to help ensure our success this year.

First, please commit to spreading the word about this campaign to your friends, acquaintances, and associates. This kind of person-to-person, one-to-one communication is the most effective way to build support, and it would result in hundreds of thousands

of newly recruited Libertarians if such an effort were made.

Second, commit to taking an active role in my campaign and in the campaigns of other Libertarians. The key to building a permanent movement is thousands of enthusiastic people working at all levels of these campaigns, accepting the challenge of creating a real alternative from the ground up. Determine how many hours per week you can devote to Libertarian political activities, and then stick with it.

Third, commit to making a financial contribution - or better, a series of financial contributions - which is personally significant to you. The fact is that there is no such thing as "enough" money to run this or any other Libertarian campaign. Every single dollar you contribute brings us that much closer to nationwide ballot status, or more literature for mass distribution, or an additional radio or television ad to reach thousands or millions of voters. Remember, too, that the Republican and Democratic nominees will each get \$29 million in federal funds this year for their campaigns.

I wish I could meet all of you individually, and personally thank those of you who have already made commitments such as these. But I hope that the ideas in this letter help to give you a clear picture of where we stand and what we can achieve.

Throughout our brief political history, Libertarians have consistently surpassed all expectations and predictions of what we could accomplish. We have always examined the alternatives before us, and we have chosen to succeed.

At this moment - at this turning point - let us choose to renew and increase our efforts to reach the goals and opportunities which can be ours in this campaign.

In Liberty,

