

Young Adult Board

This blog is titled "Straight Out of the Cornfield" and features left-wing street journalism from an Iowa City native son. My name is David Goodner, and I am a 26-year-old senior at the University of Iowa majoring in international studies and human rights. My biggest influence is Amy Goodman, a nationally syndicated columnist and host of the progressive radio show Democracy Now! This blog will highlight a mixture of objective, original reporting and subjective, opinionated commentary on local, national and international issues. My goals are to contribute to the public debate and, more metaphorically, "to beat swords into plowshares."

[Ben and Jerry hand out ice cream, say divest from Pentagon; Giuliani won't let us in, then kicks us out](#) :: [David Goodner](#)

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The University of Iowa campus in Iowa City was ground zero in the caucus-wars Wednesday night.

On the third floor of the Iowa Memorial Union, Iowans For Sensible Priorities co-founders Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield advocated their moderate budget proposal to shift wasteful military spending towards unmet social needs. On the second floor Rudy Giuliani's unnecessary security measures said "neo-fascist police state" just as clearly as his words. On the first floor a panel discussion and debate on energy policy between Brookings Institute fellows raged, if not like the prairie wind, then like biofuel.



I tried to check out Giuliani's "meet and greet" before the Iowans for Sensible Priorities event started, but official-looking people with red shirts and "Rudy" stickers, to say nothing of the uniformed and armed campus police, said I had to fill out an identification card, remove my ISP stickers, and consent to a bag search before I could go into the second-floor ballroom. I declined.

On the way back upstairs, I saw two college kids wearing Rudy Giuliani shirts and buttons walk out before Ben and Jerry's speeches started, eating free ice cream and laughing about it.

"Good thing we don't have armed police officers to guard who gets into our event, huh guys?" I asked.

The Iowans for Sensible Priorities co-founders said that 10,000 Iowans had signed the "Priorities Pledge", which states that they will only caucus for a candidate who supports a significant shift in federal budget priorities away from nuclear and other obsolete Cold War weapons and toward unmet social needs.

That's 10 percent of likely caucus-goers, Ben Cohen said.

"How can it be that the richest country in the world has the highest child poverty rate in the industrial world?" he asked the 50-75 person audience.

Iowans For Sensible Priorities states that up to \$60 billion a year in unnecessary and obsolete weapons systems could be cut and the United States would still have the deterrent effect necessary to deal with China, North Korea, Russia, and any other emerging nuclear power.

Ben and Jerry stressed that their organization was not advocating a unilateral disarmament, although some members of the audience seemed to approve of that proposal.

Iowans for Sensible Priorities state director Peggy Huppert said that the job loss from closing military bases and production sites would more than be made up for by the net job increase in the social service and energy independence sectors.

“Reinvesting in education, health care, and renewable energy would actually create more jobs,” she said, arguing that Congressional districts affected by military plant closings could be first in line for energy production factories and other new industries.

“Iowans can change the course of our country,” Ben Cohen said. “We need to start judging ourselves not on how many people we can kill, but how many people we can house, clothe, feed, and care for.”

Democratic presidential candidates Dennis Kucinich, Joe Biden, and Bill Richardson, as well as Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul, have all publicly proposed platforms calling for significant and major cuts in the Pentagon budget.

After the Iowans for Sensible Priorities event, seven members of the University of Iowa Anti-war Committee caught the tail-end of Giuliani’s speech. Giuliani said the war on terror was necessary because Islamo-fascists had brought the war to us on 9/11.

“We’re at war because others want to be at war with us,” he said. “Islamofascists attacked us and killed us and we have to be on offense.”

“Oh bullshit!” myself and other members yelled. We were quickly asked to leave by Giuliani staff, campus police, and what appeared to be Secret Service agents.

We loitered around downstairs for a few minutes until Giuliani’s so-called “meet and greet” event let out. Some hyped up bros came downstairs chanting “Rudy! Rudy! Rudy!” and “Bomb Iran! Bomb Iran! Bomb Iran!”

“Hands off Iran! Hands off Iran!” UI Anti-war Committee members chanted back.

The only event still going on by this time was the panel discussion on renewable energy policy, but I didn’t bother going in. Who needs biofuel when the Sun isn’t going anywhere?