

Moving Backward with Move America Forward

By Tanya I. Garcia | April 13, 2005 (updated April 20, 2005)

Move America Forward (MAF), a California-based advocacy group, believes that moving the country forward requires kicking the United Nations out of the United States, recalling liberal governors like Gray Davis, banning films like *Fahrenheit 9/11*, sending “illegal aliens” back to where they came from, and having a rabid anti-UN rightist John Bolton serve as our representative to the United Nations. Move America Forward has mounted media-saturation campaigns to advance its radical ideas, including leading the recent pro-Bolton campaign.

MAF bills itself as a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that is “committed to supporting America’s efforts to defeat terrorism and supporting the brave men and women of our Armed Forces.” As an advocacy organization, MAF disseminates its information mostly through radio and television ads. It has also engaged in online petitions, organized rallies on a variety of topics, and sent gourmet coffee to U.S. troops stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Former California state assemblyman Howard Kaloogian and radio personality Melanie Morgan serve as MAF co-chairmen and founders. The two joined forces for MAF’s first activity: the successful movement to recall California governor Gray Davis. Other board members are Lieutenant Colonel Robert “Buzz” Patterson, a retired air force officer who served under President Clinton, and Lewis K. Uhler, who runs the National Tax Limitation Committee and who served in various posts for Ronald Reagan when Reagan served as California governor. Siobhan Guiney is MAF’s executive director, having formerly served as legislative assistant to several congressional leaders, none of whom are divulged in her bio. Sal Russo is the chief strategist for MAF, and “has spent over 30 years in the field of political consulting and public affairs.” Russo has worked on the political campaigns of Reagan, Alfonse D’Amato, George Pataki, Jack Kemp, and Orrin Hatch.

Kaloogian and Morgan founded MAF in May 2004. Although they claim their organization is nonpartisan, their activities and leadership are clearly aligned with the Republican Party. Two of the most recent MAF initiatives are strategically and tactically linked: to move the United Nations headquarters out of the United States and to support John Bolton as the U.S. Representative to the United Nations.

MAF regards Bolton as one of the few U.S. diplomats who can “stand up to the ‘Blame America First’ crowd at the United Nations.” In one of its television ads, MAF highlights Kofi Annan’s purported “close association” with Yasser Arafat, Saddam Hussein, and Fidel Castro, while in the same alarmist tone labeling the UN as a “corrupt, anti-American body.” Even though the UN Secretary General was absolved of any involvement in the Oil for Food scandal, MAF has continued to vilify this leader, implying that the UN supports terrorism. The MAF website features an image characteristic of boxing matches with photos of Bolton and Annan in opposing corners.

According to MAF, the United Nations is an “apologist and defender of terrorist organizations and their agents.” In one of its television ads, MAF says that the United States should no longer “harbor” the UN, and that we should begin “kicking the UN out of the United States” as a necessary step “to move America forward.”

After the second week of Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on Bolton’s nomination, MAF launched a radio ad campaign blasting Senator George Voinovich (R-OH) after he shocked the committee by announcing that his “conscience” would not let him vote for Bolton without further investigation into charges that Bolton harassed CIA, State Department, and USAID employees. MAF set out to create a popular backlash in Ohio that would persuade Voinovich to confirm Bolton’s nomination when the committee reconvenes in early May.

As part of their “Secure Our Borders” campaign, MAF is collaborating with NoMoreAmnesty.com in the “Hold Their Feet to the Fire” initiative that seeks to reform immigration laws by holding a rally in Washington, DC to “confront Congress” and make sure that unauthorized U.S. residents cannot legally obtain drivers’ licenses,



among other demands. There is no apparent link between MAF and the Minuteman Project that has sought to “assist” law enforcement by alerting U.S. Border Patrol employees in Arizona of any incoming illegal aliens.

Although MAF proclaims that it is dedicated to “preserving our American heritage of freedom and liberty,” it apparently doesn’t consider freedom of speech as a traditional American value. In response to an anti-war effigy in front of a home in Land Park, California, MAF organized a rally in front of this home to make the owners take down their image of a soldier hanging from a noose with signs that read “Your Tax Dollars at Work” and “Bush Lied, I Died.” MAF’s Melanie Morgan also commented on how the home also displayed “the Iraqi flag of Saddam Hussein” and Palestinian flags in the windows close to its effigy, inaccurately linking the Iraqi flag with the deposed leader instead of acknowledging the homeowners’ intent to sympathize with Palestinians and Iraqis. The effigy was one of the last attempts in the homeowners’ two-year effort to display their disagreement with the Iraq War.

MAF has also sponsored a campaign to have Michael Moore’s *Fahrenheit 9/11* censored or banned before its release in the summer of 2004. The group initially tried to get movie theaters not to show the documentary, but Lions Gate Films, one of the distributors, released a statement condemning MAF’s attempt “to interfere with the rights of people who may want to decide for themselves. Regardless of a person’s political perspective, we hope

that everybody can agree that censorship is antithetical to the American way.”

Later, MAF teamed up with Disney to present a film entitled “America’s Heart & Soul,” which was intended as a response to Moore’s film. According to MAF, “Unlike the negative and misleading storyline of Michael Moore’s *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Disney’s *America’s Heart & Soul* features a collection of upbeat storylines of real-life Americans who pursue their passions in a way that underscores what makes America a great nation. Disney, which owns Miramax (the maker of Moore’s film), refused to allow its subsidiary from distributing the film.

There is little public information about MAF’s funding sources, apart from a CBS News snippet that attributed its funding from private donations. In its pro-Bolton campaign, MAF declared it received contributions from “thousands” of Move America Forward grassroots members to promote the Bolton ads.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

UN Basher as UN Ambassador: Bolton’s Baggage
By Tom Barry (March 11, 2005)
<http://www.irc-online.org/content/commentary/2005/0503bolton.php>

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