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DEAN WON'T TONE IT DOWN. Democratic National Chairman Howard Dean said yesterday that positive responses from supporters have reinforced his determination to keep talking tough despite suggestions from some congressional Democrats that he tone down his rhetoric.

"People want us to fight," Dean told the national party's executive committee in Washington. "We are here to fight." Last week, Dean described Republicans as "pretty much a white, Christian party" and said many in the GOP "never made an honest living." He has weathered criticism from Republican lawmakers and some in his own party.

GOP SENATOR: CONSIDER CLOSING GUANTANAMO. Florida Sen. Mel Martinez said the Bush administration should consider closing the Guantanamo Bay prison for terrorism suspects. He is the first high-profile Republican to make the suggestion. "It's become an icon for bad stories and at some point you wonder the cost-benefit ratio," Martinez said Friday. "How much do you get out of having that facility there? ... Can this be done some other way a little better?" Martinez made his comments after a suggestion by Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) that the prison in Cuba be shut down. President Bush said Wednesday that his administration was "exploring all alternatives" for detaining the prisoners. Human rights groups and former detainees say prisoners at Guantanamo have been mistreated.

CAMPERS PROTEST SCHOOL CLOSING. Parents angry that the Archdiocese of Boston abruptly locked their kids out of school before graduation ceremonies have started a camp-out in a city square across from the school in protest. About 50 people stayed in the 10 tents set up Friday night across from Our **Lady of Presentation** School. The Boston archdiocese closed the school Wednesday, two days ahead of schedule, after hearing reports that protesters intended to occupy the building Thursday in hope of keeping it open.

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