

## Editorial

### *Presidents' Day*

This week marks the celebration of the births of two of the greatest Presidents of the United States, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, Presidents who exemplified the best of our country to the world, as well as our citizens. From the standards which they set, we would best reflect upon where we stand as a nation today.

The first quality both Washington and Lincoln were known for, was honesty. Both disdained to pander to the populace, or to come up with a lie when it was convenient, and could get them out of trouble.

Could there be any greater contrast with our leaders today?

The second quality these two Presidents embodied was humane treatment of friends and enemies alike. Washington, when he was commanding the Revolutionary Army, reacted to the bestiality being perpetrated against his troops when they were captured by the British, insisted that British prisoners of war be treated with civility. His example was taken up by Lincoln in the Civil War, when he instituted the Lieber Code, which mandated humane treatment for prisoners of war of the United States.

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The third quality which Washington and Lincoln shared was a commitment to improving and building the nation, both physically and morally. Both men envisioned pulling the nation together with great infrastructure projects, and strides of technological progress—Washington with canals, and Lincoln with railroads. They also set before the public great educational projects—Washington, a national university, and Lincoln, the land-grant college system.

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There is, of course, a fundamental source for the similar policies of these two great leaders, who effectively pulled a divided nation together during their Presidencies. Both found their inspiration in the unique and profound conceptions of republicanism that went into the establishment of the United States, the conceptions of the Declaration of Independence, and the Preamble

of the Constitution. With deep humility, both men sought to fulfill those commitments to the inalienable rights of man, and the general welfare, by working to improve themselves, as well as their nation.

The nation, and the world, sensed the quality of these American leaders, who won their respect. They saw their own lives as one with the nation. In truth, they gave their lives for the posterity of the nation, without demanding anything in return. With the exception of the Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and the political leadership of Lyndon LaRouche, we have not seen their like since.

To give a taste of that quality, hear Lincoln as he stopped in Philadelphia on his way to his inauguration in 1861:

“I am filled with deep emotion at finding myself standing here, in this place, where were collected together the wisdom, the patriotism, the devotion to principle, from which sprang the institutions under which we live. You have kindly suggested to me that in my hands is the task of restoring peace to the present distracted condition of the country. I can say in return, Sir, that all the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn, so far as I have been able to draw them, from the sentiments which originated and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence. I have often pondered over the dangers which were incurred by the men who assembled here, and framed and adopted that Declaration of Independence. I have pondered over the toils that were endured by the officers and soldiers of the army who achieved that Independence. I have often inquired of myself, what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of the separation of the Colonies from the motherland; but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but, I hope, to the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weight would be lifted from the shoulders of all men. This is a sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence. . . .”