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## Restoring American Statesmanship: A Citizen's Guide

John Shaw

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# RESTORING AMERICAN STATESMANSHIP

## A CITIZEN'S GUIDE



**JOHN T. SHAW**

**SIU** SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CARBONDALE **PAUL SIMON  
PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE**



RESTORING AMERICAN  
STATESMANSHIP  
A CITIZEN'S GUIDE

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## PREFACE

This is a challenging time for the political system in the United States. A breathtaking array of serious problems confound the nation as the two major parties quarrel, citizens fume, and critical institutions sputter. Stalemates persist over massively disruptive climate change, expensive and often inaccessible health care, soaring budget deficits and mounting public debt, crumbling infrastructure, dangerous racial tensions, and a broken immigration system.

There are, of course, no easy answers. However, the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute believes there is an important way to begin to get our nation back on track: by restoring statesmanship as an ideal and as an aspiration for American political leaders.

In the pages that follow, we offer a working definition of statesmanship, identify its essential qualities, and provide more than a dozen specific examples of statesmen and stateswomen from American history.

Statesmanship is difficult. It can derail or at least complicate political careers. It often elicits more rebukes than applause. But statesmanship confers at least one substantial, even timeless, reward. “If you practice statesmanship, history will treat you kindly,” said Sam Wheeler, the Illinois State Historian.

This guide does not purport to be the final word on statesmanship. We endeavor to resurrect this critical concept from the dusty pages of history books and use it to illuminate and inspire public affairs in the United States. We want to return statesmanship to America’s political vocabulary.

Some may challenge our definition of statesmanship and others may disagree with the examples we offer. We welcome your comments—both agreements and dissents!

Our goal is to stimulate a vigorous discussion about statesmanship and reintroduce this concept into the political discourse. It would be far healthier for Americans to debate if, for example, George Marshall was a more consequential statesman than Arthur Vandenberg or whether Margaret Chase Smith



was a more impressive stateswoman than Barbara Jordan, than to merely lament current failures and disappointments.

This guide briefly examines the barriers to statesmanship in 21st century America and considers the critical link between successful statesmen and engaged citizens. The Institute will publish a subsequent report that examines these issues more comprehensively.

The Paul Simon Public Policy Institute was established in 1997 by former Senator Paul Simon of Illinois to consider the important issues of our time. Nothing is more important to the future of the United States than elevating the quality of our leaders and our citizens.



## A TIME OF TESTING

The American political system is under considerable stress, battered and bruised by relentless conflict and meager accomplishments. Increasing partisanship, intense polarization, faltering institutions, furious citizens, uncertain leaders, and unsolved problems are a disturbing and pervasive reality in the United States. Whatever one's ideological views, it is hard to argue that current leaders and institutions are producing acceptable results.

Americans are troubled and divided. Polls show a sharp decline of trust in most institutions including churches, newspapers, television and internet news, corporations, Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Presidency.<sup>1</sup> We have become suspicious of anyone claiming expertise. Most disturbing of all is a poisonous distrust among citizens, with young people now the least likely to trust others. Historian David M. Kennedy observes that a “culture of distrust pervades virtually every aspect of modern American life.” Speaking more broadly, Kennedy finds that a “near-perfect storm of converging forces, some with deep roots in past American experience, some born of more recent history, has converged to wallop the American political system with cyclonic energy in the first years of the present century.”<sup>2</sup> Few would assert that this “cyclonic energy” is propelling the United States in a positive direction.

*The Atlantic* magazine titled its December, 2019 issue, “How to Stop a Civil War.” More than a dozen articles detailed the erosion of American democracy and governance. Editor Jeffrey Goldberg warned that this erosion threatens “to place the American experiment in permanent eclipse.” Harvard History Professor Danielle Allen wrote the “republic seems to be unraveling” and argued that “if we do not address the corrosion of our democracy itself, we will have lost the essence of the American experiment.” Editor Yoni Appelbaum titled his article, “How America Ends.”<sup>3</sup>

The United States confronts a trifecta of ominous problems: uninspiring leaders, disgruntled and disengaged citizens, and faltering institutions. The

political system needs major reforms to combat these complex, interconnected problems. There are no easy fixes.

But there is a clear place to start. The United States must restore a culture of statesmanship in our public affairs, enshrining it as a noble aspiration and a cherished ambition for those entering politics, government, and diplomacy. Statesmen and stateswomen must take the lead in tackling urgent problems, restoring trust in our government and political system, and in uniting the nation in a common purpose. Feckless or ineffective leadership cannot be accepted as the norm. Strong, dynamic, and purposeful leadership can elevate the nation and inspire the world again. The United States needs effective incentives to promote and reward statesmanship.



## THE CHALLENGE OF STATESMANSHIP

Since at least the times of Plato and Aristotle, political thinkers have tried to discern and describe the essential features of statesmanship. That intellectual exploration has ranged from the numbingly esoteric to the deeply practical. For our purposes, statesmanship is defined as exceptional leadership that is visionary, courageous, compassionate, effective, and civil. A statesman must understand, and then advance, the public good. A statesman must understand what needs to be done and also how to do it. A statesman must seek to do the right thing regardless of immediate popularity and short-term political calculations.

Some posit that statesmanship is situational and that it often arises during times of crisis—that serious challenges produce great leaders. Others locate an almost random quality in its occurrence. Statesmanship can occur as a single event or as a life-long commitment. We define it as a clear and consistent pattern of public service that focuses on long-term concerns to advance the public good while subordinating personal and partisan considerations. Statesmanship does not stipulate an unblemished career but rather a discernible tendency to place the public good front and center and to think and act with serious regard for the future. Statesmen are not born; they grow and evolve and often learn from mistakes and setbacks. “The difference between a statesman and a politician is that the former looks to the next generation and the latter to the next election,” declares an English proverb.<sup>4</sup>

Though statesmanship can involve bipartisanship, the two terms are not synonymous. A strong bipartisan consensus can enact harmful policies or evade hard choices while fierce partisans can be statesmen and stateswomen provided they are willing to set aside partisan interests to advance the public good. Statesmanship must not be viewed in such an elevated way that few can aspire to it. But it also should not be devalued so that any policymaker who makes even minimally constructive gestures toward problem-solving is decla-

red a statesman. Statesmanship, according to one analyst, requires “a rare combination of greatness and goodness.”<sup>5</sup>

Given our political climate, it is easy to forget that statesmanship has been a critical feature of American history. From the bravery and vision of the founding generation in the 18th century, to the wisdom and insight of public officials following the Second World War, to the leaders of movements for social and economic equality in the 1960s and beyond, the United States has produced world-class statesmen and stateswomen. Statesmanship has sometimes occurred in generational clusters, suggesting that statesmanship can beget statesmanship and that elevated leadership is self-nourishing and perhaps even contagious. But statesmanship can also be a lonely endeavor with a brave and wise individual illuminating the way in the darkness.

When statesmen consider policy issues, their first question is, “what is in the public interest?” Personal and partisan considerations exist, but are secondary. Genuine statesmanship requires leaders to consider issues soberly, carefully weigh evidence, and fairly render judgements, even if they go against personal preferences or are contrary to the desires of political supporters. Statesmanship can be dramatic, even spectacular, and involve breathtaking risks. But it can also be prosaic and subdued as difficult challenges are quietly confronted and creatively addressed. Historic accomplishments and inspired leadership sometimes take place under the radar and garner little recognition.

The term “statesman” has an inherent gender bias and it is time to reconsider our terminology. In this essay, statesman emphatically refers to both men and women. In fact, on the current global stage there may be more women than men with a credible claim to this designation: Jacinda Ardern from New Zealand, Angela Merkel from Germany, Mary Robinson from Ireland, and Margot Wallström from Sweden, to name but a few.

The five cardinal characteristics of statesmanship are vision, courage, compassion, effectiveness, and civility. Not all statesmen possess all of these traits throughout their careers but these are the critical qualities to identify as we evaluate leaders.

## ***Vision***

This term incorporates intelligence, wisdom, prudence, judgement, and foresight. The ability to see beyond immediate circumstances and to develop and execute a long-term strategy is both exceptionally rare and absolutely critical in public affairs. Focusing on the long-term is difficult and often provides few career benefits. The public does not often reward those who look over the horizon but this quality is essential. George Washington's correspondence includes the phrase, "a century hence," underscoring his commitment to give serious consideration for the future in all that he did. *The Book of Proverbs* puts it simply: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

## ***Courage***

"You will never do anything in this world without courage," Aristotle said. "It is the greatest quality of the mind next to honor." Most people are reluctant to risk their careers for causes that are unpopular or whose benefits are not evident. Even without the threat of losing an election or being removed from office, bold action can stall, derail, or at least complicate career ambitions. In contrast to courage, we routinely confront what Senator Paul Simon of Illinois referred to as a culture of pandering. "We have spawned 'leadership' that does not lead, that panders to our whims rather than telling us the truth, that follows the crowd rather than challenging us, that weakens us rather than strengthening us," he wrote. "It is easy to go downhill, and we are now following that easy path. Pandering is not illegal, but it is immoral. It is doing the convenient when the right course demands inconvenience and courage."<sup>6</sup>

## ***Compassion***

It has been said that without passion nothing gets done and without compassion the wrong things get done. A compassionate leader tries to solve problems, ease suffering, and create opportunities. "Compassion and tolerance are not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength," said the Dalai Lama. He added: "It is not enough to be compassionate. You must act." Compassion is not just an emotion; it is a feeling that triggers a response. Compassion marries empathy and action. It also requires respect for those who will come after us—a commitment to stewardship.

## *Effectiveness*

While no statesman succeeds in every endeavor, accomplishing goals is essential. Don Quixote is an enormously appealing figure in world literature but he should not be viewed as the patron saint of the statesman. Successful leaders need more than good intentions; they need to transform hopes and plans into results. Noble failure may be poetic but it is also unsatisfying. Statesmen need to work skillfully with others—subordinates, peers and superiors. They need to listen carefully, evaluate evidence, and make sound decisions, mindful of both current circumstances and the future. “Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground,” advised President Franklin Roosevelt. Thomas Edison put it more starkly: “Vision without execution is hallucination.”

## *Civility*

Maintaining civility during acrimonious times and in the face of great challenges is difficult and necessary. “We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies,” Abraham Lincoln implored the South in his First Inaugural Address as he tried to prevent the Civil War. Civility allows for trusting relationships, productive partnerships, and successful negotiations. It creates at least the possibility for compromise and conciliation.<sup>7</sup>

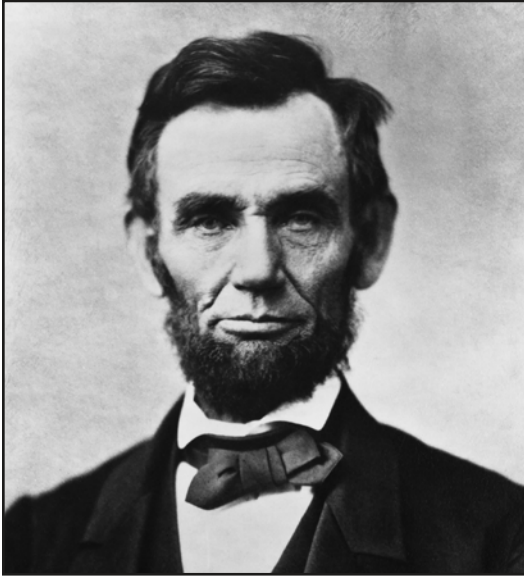
Civility also requires respect for the views of others, both supporters and adversaries. “Every action done in company ought to be done with some sign of respect to those that are present,” George Washington wrote. He also instructed: “Speak not injurious words neither in jest nor earnest; scoff at none although they give occasion.”

Statesmanship, in summary, requires a rare blend of skills and sensibilities. Some contend that it requires the formal wielding of government power. However, for our purposes it demands the ability to decisively shape public policy. Statesmanship is more than protest or opposition, it requires building something valuable and enduring.

“A statesman’s most distinguishing characteristic is his ability to inspire,” said Sir John Colville. “He must also have courage, persistence, imagination and a thick skin. He must have the tenacity to never give up, never to be deflected from his objective—however many detours he makes in order to attain it—and never to despair.”<sup>8</sup>



THE ARCHETYPAL STATESMAN  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN



*The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country. Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration, will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation.*

Abraham Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863.



As we consider statesmanship, it may seem a cliché to begin with Abraham Lincoln. He is widely regarded as the greatest American president, revered by experts and the public. Still, it is illuminating to examine the nature of his leadership, the scope of his accomplishments, and his limitations.

In the air-brushed version of history, Lincoln is depicted as constantly wise, always virtuous, and ever victorious, his many accomplishments fore-ordained. But his career included lost elections, professional frustration, personal struggles, and political misjudgments. Throughout much of the Civil War, critics and even some supporters viewed Lincoln as indecisive, reactive, and out of his depth. For much of his personal and political life, failure seemed not only a distinctive possibility but a likelihood. But he never stopped evolving.

Lincoln was neither a prodigy nor a quick study. “I am slow to learn and slow to forget what I have learned,” he said. “My mind is like a piece of steel—very hard to scratch anything on it, and almost impossible after you get it there to rub it out.” He observed that when he “got on a hunt for an idea” he could not rest until he “caught it” and “bounded it north and bounded it south, and bounded it east, and bounded it west.” Lincoln had a striking capacity for growth, ignited by a life of persistent struggle and a lifelong commitment to self-education. Lincoln worked as a surveyor, clerk, boatman, and laborer. He served in the Illinois General Assembly for a dozen years and for a single term in the U.S. House of Representatives. A successful and popular lawyer in Springfield, he was a persuasive and powerful advocate for his clients. Yet he lost two races for the United States Senate and his career stalled several times.

Lincoln was elected president in 1860 with less than 40 percent of the popular vote. Overwhelmingly supported in the North, he was regarded as a regional candidate and his name did not even appear on the ballot in ten Southern states. Days after his election, some Southern senators vacated Washington and returned home. A month before he was sworn in as president on March 4, 1861, seven Southern states created the Confederacy and a civil war seemed inevitable. From the outset of his administration, Lincoln’s government splintered into factions and many in political circles derided him as a bumbling leader. Attorney General Edward Bates believed Lincoln was “an excellent man, and in the main wise but he lacks *will* and *purpose* and I greatly fear he has not the *power of command*.” Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase dep-

lored his management style. General George McClellan dismissed Lincoln as an “idiot” who was “quite incapable of rising to the height of the merits of the question and the magnitude of the crisis.”<sup>9</sup>

Lincoln persisted during the bloody, exhausting, and heartbreaking years of the Civil War. He sometimes grew despondent, telling his friend Senator Orville Browning during one of the darkest days of the war, “We are now on the brink of destruction. It appears to me the Almighty is against us, and I can hardly see a ray of hope.”<sup>10</sup> Lincoln was harshly criticized by Congress and the public throughout his first presidential term. Not until 1864 did this sentiment change when victories by generals Ulysses Grant and William Sherman signaled an impending Union triumph. This paved the way for Lincoln’s reelection that November.

Over time, the President forged a clear moral rationale for the war, expanding his objectives from preserving the Union and halting western expansion of slavery to ending slavery and restoring the Union. Lincoln’s moral purpose became striking as was his ability to pursue longer-term objectives. Despite the immense demands of waging war, Lincoln backed legislation to create Land Grant Colleges, complete the transcontinental railroad, and settle the West through the Homestead Act. His bold decision to sign the Emancipation Proclamation transformed the nature and the narrative of the Civil War.

In the face of almost unimaginable pressure and endless setbacks, Lincoln was magnanimous, strategic, and resolute. “I expect to maintain this contest until successful, or till I die, or am conquered, or my term expires, or Congress or the country forsakes me,” he declared in 1862 after a series of battlefield defeats.<sup>11</sup> He deftly maneuvered between conservatives and radicals, free states and slave states. He sensed that proceeding decisively against slavery in the war’s first year, as some Republicans urged, would shatter his war coalition.

Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address on March 4, 1865 is a stunningly eloquent statement about history and hope. Speaking only about 700 words in seven minutes from the East Front of the Capitol, Lincoln poetically rendered a master class in statesmanship. “With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him

who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.”<sup>12</sup>

Lincoln is a model statesman. He developed a clear and compelling vision of what issues were at stake in the Civil War—reconstituting the Union and ending slavery—and worked relentlessly to prevail. He crafted a coherent political and military strategy and displayed tactical shrewdness and dexterity. Despite many missteps he succeeded and as the Union won the Civil War Lincoln also backed initiatives to build railroads, create universities, and settle the West—to build America.



## AMERICAN STATESMANSHIP

SUSAN B. ANTHONY



*We shall someday be heeded, and when we shall have our amendment to the Constitution of the United States, everybody will think it was always so, just exactly as many young people think that all the privileges, all the freedom, all the enjoyments which woman now possesses always were hers. They have no idea of how every single inch of ground that she stands upon today has been gained by the hard work of some little handful of women of the past.*

Susan B. Anthony, speech to National American Woman Suffrage Association  
Convention, February 15, 1894.

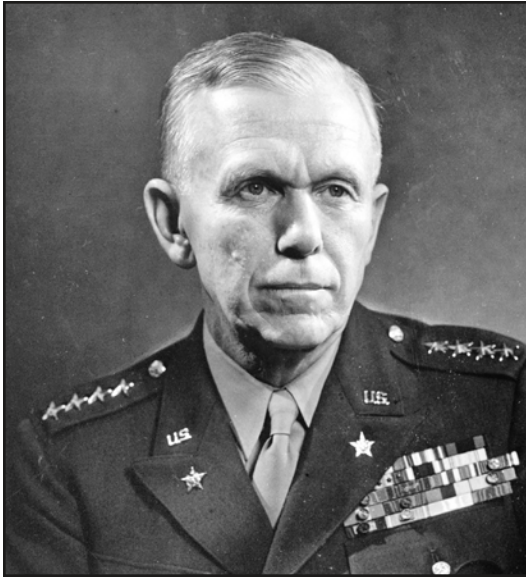
Susan B. Anthony was a reformer who fought to end slavery and expand the rights of women. Born in Massachusetts in 1820 and living for nearly ninety years, she played a pivotal role in the women's suffrage movement for much of the 19th century. Teaming with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Anthony drafted a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote. What came to be referred to as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment was ratified as the 19th amendment to the Constitution in 1920, nearly forty years after it was first introduced and about two decades after Anthony's death.

She offered a clear vision in which women enjoyed full citizenship—and she worked relentlessly to achieve it. For nearly half a century, Anthony traveled the country by any means available, often delivering a hundred speeches a year. She carefully organized suffrage events in dozens of states and in Washington, D.C. and pressed her case through statewide campaigns, lobbying appeals to Congress, and litigation in the courts. Despite frequent failure, she never gave up. “I suppose our movement, like all from the beginning, must have its Forty years in the Wilderness,” she wrote.

Anthony was meticulous and detail-oriented, bold and ambitious. She never eased her efforts. Near the end of her life, Anthony expressed confidence in the ultimate success of the suffrage movement predicting, “it will come, but I shall not see it...it is inevitable, we can no more deny forever the right of self-government to one-half our people than we could keep the Negro forever in bondage. It will not be wrought by the same disrupting forces that freed the slave but come it will, and I believe within a generation.”

Anthony's statesmanship was exemplified by her devotion to the goal of securing the vote for women. She displayed tireless determination and unflagging courage in the face of threats and ridicule. She was both strategic and tactically adept, shifting priorities based on changing political circumstances and differing opportunities in various states. Anthony was practical, and ultimately, effective. She never wielded official power but possessed abundant moral authority. Near the end of her life and mindful of her pivotal role in the suffrage struggle, Anthony was generous to her allies in this historic endeavor. “There have been others also just as true and devoted to the cause...with such women consecrating their lives, failure is impossible,” she declared.<sup>13</sup>

# GEORGE MARSHALL



***There must be an effort of the spirit—to be magnanimous, to act in friendship, to strive to help rather than hinder. There must be an effort of analysis to seek out the causes of war, the factors which favor peace, and to study their application to the difficult problems which beset our international intercourse. There must be material effort—to initiate and sustain those great undertakings whether military, or economic, on which world equilibrium will depend.***

George Marshall, Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, December 11, 1953.

A 1901 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, George Marshall slowly ascended the ranks of the peacetime American army. But as crises gripped the world in the late 1930s and President Franklin Roosevelt prepared the United States for war, Marshall was tapped for critical jobs in the Army: chief of war plans, deputy chief of staff, and then chief of staff, a position he assumed on September 1, 1939, the day Germany invaded Poland.

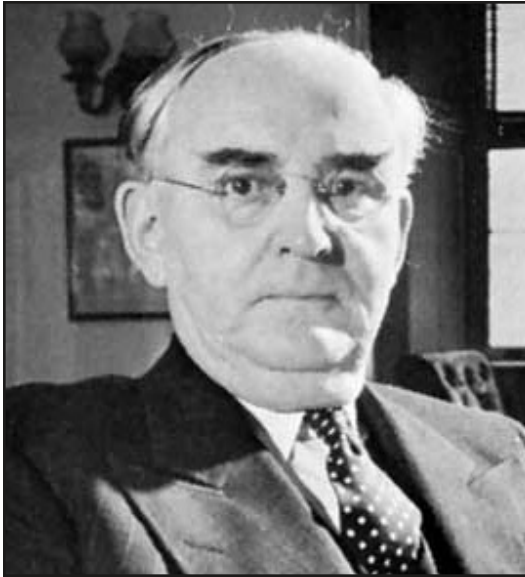
Marshall became, in the words of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the “organizer of victory” during World War II. He transformed

the anemic U.S. army with less than 200,000 troops into a massive and lethal fighting force of more than eight million soldiers that played a decisive role in defeating Germany, Italy, and Japan. President Harry Truman appointed Marshall as Secretary of State after the war and the new diplomat developed policies that fortified American leadership and positioned the West to prevail in the Cold War. He is best known for the Marshall Plan, the bold economic program to rebuild war-ravaged Europe. Marshall outlined his proposal to assist European nations during his commencement speech at Harvard in June 1947 and the plan was hammered into place by various Truman administration officials and lawmakers. However, it was Marshall's stature and reputation that propelled the plan through Congress and into law. The program provided \$13 billion (\$130 billion in today's dollars) to assist Europe's recovery. It remains the paragon of a compassionate foreign policy based on enlightened self-interest and was also the linchpin of a broader strategy to counter the Soviet Union. After the Marshall Plan was approved by the U.S. Congress, *The Economist* magazine proclaimed "there is no record of a comparable act of inspired and generous diplomacy." British Prime Minister Clement Atlee described it as an "act of unparalleled generosity and statesmanship."<sup>14</sup>

Marshall resigned as Secretary of State in 1949 because of poor health, but later served as the president of the American Red Cross and Secretary of Defense. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953, Marshall accepted it knowing the idea of the award being given to a soldier was perplexing for some. "I am afraid this does not seem as remarkable to me as it quite evidently appears to others. I know a great deal of the horrors and tragedies of war," he said.<sup>15</sup>

In war and in peace, Marshall was a statesman. He drafted the military strategy for the United States and its allies to prevail during World War II and then developed an economic recovery and national security strategy that resulted in decades of peace and prosperity. He was a consummate professional who operated effectively with superiors, peers, and subordinates. He listened respectfully, critically examined evidence, and made sound decisions with a steady eye toward the future.

## ARTHUR VANDENBERG



***It is a plan for peace, stability, and freedom. As such, it involves the clear self-interest of the United States. It can be the turning point in history for 100 years to come. If it fails, we have done our final best. If it succeeds, our children and our children's children will call us blessed.***

Arthur Vandenberg, speech to the U.S. Senate, March 1, 1948.

A native of Michigan and the long-time editor and publisher of the *Grand Rapids Herald*, Arthur Vandenberg was appointed to the Senate in 1928 to fill a vacancy and went on to serve in the upper chamber until his death in 1951. Once an ardent isolationist, Vandenberg changed his views and played a pivotal role in securing congressional approval of the central elements of Democratic President Harry Truman's expansive foreign policy such as the Marshall Plan, NATO, and the United Nations.

Vandenberg's transformation into an internationalist was triggered by Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. Up to that point, he had urged the United States not to get involved in World War II. On January 10, 1945, Vandenberg spoke



on the Senate floor and challenged his colleagues and fellow citizens in remarks that were heralded as “the speech heard around the world.” He said “there are critical moments in the life of every nation which call for the straightest, the plainest, and the most courageous thinking of which we are capable.”<sup>16</sup> “The United States, he declared, needed to intensify cooperation with its allies to win the war and then create institutions to secure the peace.

When the conflict ended Vandenberg undermined his aspirations for the 1948 Republican presidential nomination by supporting the Democratic president on controversial and consequential foreign policy initiatives. As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he helped negotiate the details of the Marshall Plan and fashioned the legislative strategy that allowed it to win congressional approval. He urged Americans to stop “partisan politics at the water’s edge” and unite behind a bipartisan foreign policy that protected the nation’s long-term interests.

Designing and championing foreign policies that bolstered America’s position in the world for decades, Vandenberg was a statesman. Visionary and courageous, he subordinated his personal dreams for the good of the United States. He helped shape and implement President Truman’s national security strategy because he was convinced that a bipartisan foreign policy was in the national interest.

## MARGARET CHASE SMITH



***I think it is high time for the United States Senate and its members to do some real soul searching and to weigh our consciences as to the manner in which we are performing our duty to the people of America and the manner in which we are using or abusing our individual powers and privileges...I do not believe the American people will uphold any political party that puts political exploitation above national interest. Surely we Republicans are not that desperate for victory. I do not want to see the Republican Party win that way. While it would be a fleeting victory for the Republican Party, it would be a more lasting defeat for the American people.***

Margaret Chase Smith, speech to the U.S. Senate, June 1, 1950.

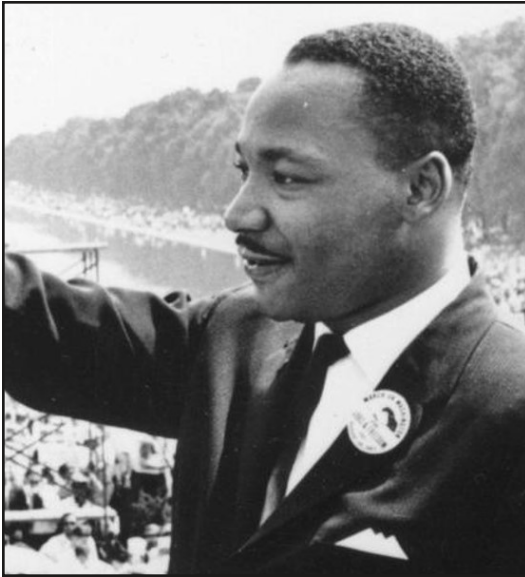
A native of Maine, Margaret Chase Smith succeeded her husband in the U.S. House of Representatives after his death in 1940. She ran for and won his seat and then served in the House for eight years. Smith was elected to the Senate in 1948, becoming the first woman elected to both houses of Congress. While still a freshman senator, Smith decided she would not pass-

ively observe Senator Joseph McCarthy accuse scores of State Department officials of being Communist supporters bent on subverting the United States. On June 1, 1950, Smith spoke on the Senate floor and challenged McCarthy, a fellow Republican, when more senior members of her party were unwilling to do so. “I speak as a Republican. I speak as a woman. I speak as a United States senator. I speak as an American,” she began, rebuking McCarthy’s technique of brazen accusations without evidence. “The nation sorely needs a Republican victory. But I do not want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the Four Horsemen of Calumny—Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry, and Smear.”<sup>17</sup> Smith inserted into the *Congressional Record* a statement that she called her “Declaration of Conscience.” The statement detailed her critique of McCarthy and was endorsed by six other Republican senators. “It is high time that we stopped thinking politically as Republicans and Democrats about elections and started thinking patriotically as Americans about national security based on individual freedom,” she wrote.

Initially, Smith’s battle against McCarthy had limited support and made her a pariah in the Senate Republican caucus. She was passed over for committee assignments, shunned by Republican leader Robert Taft, and challenged in her 1954 Senate primary by a candidate supported by McCarthy. However, Smith won re-election in Maine that year and sixty-two senators also voted to condemn McCarthy for conduct “contrary to senatorial traditions.” Smith’s courage to challenge McCarthy was a critical first step in confronting his affront to American democracy. Her actions generated praise and condemnation. “This cool breeze of honesty from Maine can blow the whole miasma out of the nation’s soul,” declared an editorial in the *Hartford Courant*. But others accused her of being “Moscow loving” and disloyal to her party and country.<sup>18</sup>

Smith’s statesmanship was anchored in courage and her commitment to fairness and due process. She understood that achieving a partisan political victory through dubious means would damage both her party and the United States. She understood that how a political victory is achieved is of paramount importance. She challenged Joseph McCarthy when few were willing to do so—even putting her career at risk. After the passing of the McCarthy era, Smith remained devoted to public service, serving in the Senate with independence and candor until 1973.

## MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



***Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and, without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right.***

Martin Luther King Jr., Letter From a Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963.

A Baptist minister and social activist, Martin Luther King Jr. led the civil rights movement in the United States from the mid-1950s until his assassination in 1968. King was at the center of the reforms that secured civil and political rights for black voters, produced laws to end segregation of public facilities in the South, changed the unwritten customs and norms in that region, and challenged those in North to support racial integration and economic justice.

As he entered the ministry, King was captivated by Mohandas Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent resistance that had been employed in India. King adapted this technique in advocating for civil rights for blacks in the United

States. As a young pastor at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, King gained national prominence when he helped challenge racial segregation of that city's buses. Rosa Parks, a black bus rider, was arrested on December 1, 1955 for refusing to relinquish her seat to a white man, thus triggering a year-long bus boycott by blacks and propelling the civil rights movement. During the Montgomery boycott, America was riveted by King's strong opposition to segregation through non-violent civil resistance despite threats to his safety and property.

Building on the success of the Montgomery boycott, King helped organize the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and broadened his civil rights agenda. King's call for non-violent resistance won the support of many blacks and white liberals. He skillfully used the media, especially television, to nationalize and internationalize the civil rights struggle. He shrewdly organized high profile sit-ins, freedom rides, and marches and understood the benefits of carefully staged confrontations.

King campaigned in Birmingham, Alabama in the spring of 1963 to end segregation at lunch counters and in the workplace, confronting the city's racist commissioner of public safety, Bull Connor. While jailed for his activities in the campaign, King wrote a passionate letter that became a signature statement of the civil rights movement. He argued that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."<sup>19</sup>

Near the conclusion of the Birmingham campaign, King helped organize the March on Washington on August 28, 1963. More than 250,000 people gathered on the National Mall to advocate for civil rights and jobs. This rally bolstered the legislative effort in Congress that culminated in the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The Civil Rights Act ended segregation in public places and banned employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The Voting Rights Act sought to overcome legal barriers to voting by blacks at the state and local level.

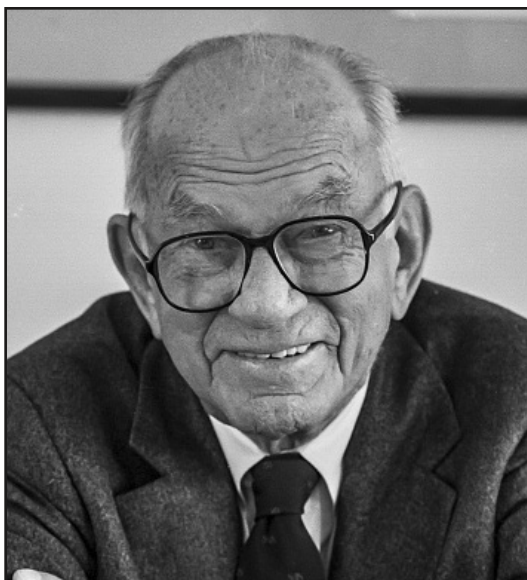
In 1964, King, then only thirty-five, became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for his advocacy for racial equality through non-violent means. The ensuing years were difficult for King as the civil rights movement splintered and some black leaders accused him of being too willing to compromise. King was planning the Poor People's March in Washington, D.C. in

the spring of 1968 when he traveled to Memphis to support a strike by that city's sanitation workers. He was assassinated there on April 4, 1968.

While other civil rights figures were also important, King's spiritual and political leadership was essential. Charismatic and practical, he coupled black aspirations for justice and civil rights with democratic and Christian ideals. His commitment to non-violent protest and interracial cooperation appealed to the consciences of Americans. King courageously advanced the cause of civil rights, pressing forward in the face of ominous threats to his family and himself.



## J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT



***There are two Americas. One is the America of Lincoln and Adlai Stevenson; the other is the America of Teddy Roosevelt and the modern superpatriots. One is generous and humane, the other narrowly egoistical; one is self-critical, the other is self-righteous; one is sensible, the other romantic; one is good-humored, the other solemn; one is inquiring, the other pontificating; one is moderate, the other filled with passionate intensity; one is judicious and the other arrogant in the use of great power.***

J. William Fulbright, *Arrogance of Power*, 1966.

J. William Fulbright of Arkansas was a prodigy. He won a Rhodes Scholarship after graduating from the University of Arkansas and was selected as president of his alma mater at the age of thirty-four. He was elected to the U.S. House in 1942 and to the Senate two years later where he served for thirty years. As the longest serving chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he presided over that panel from 1959 to 1974. He sponsored the Fulbright Scholars Act that created scholarships for Americans to study



abroad and for foreign scholars to study in the United States. This educational exchange program has strengthened America's relationships with other nations.

Fulbright's most dramatic claim to statesmanship came when he organized the 1966 hearings in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to examine the rationale, strategy, and conduct of the American war in Vietnam. He invited soldiers and respected diplomats to testify. Legendary diplomat George Kennan, the architect of America's Cold War containment strategy, told Fulbright's panel that the United States should withdraw from South Vietnam "as soon as this could be done without inordinate damage to our prestige or stability in the area." Other witnesses also challenged the wisdom of the war, arguing that it diverted the United States from more fundamental interests and tarnished its reputation as humane and strategic.<sup>20</sup>

Fulbright presided over these searing hearings in the face of President Lyndon Johnson's fierce opposition and sharp personal attacks. Johnson even urged the FBI to investigate Fulbright and never forgave his fellow Democrat for launching a public probe of the war. The hearings prompted many Americans to reassess the strategy in Vietnam. Fulbright said he was adhering to the primary responsibility of a legislator to "let nothing of consequence go unquestioned or unexamined. The legislator's job is to analyze, scrutinize, and criticize, responsibly and lawfully, but vigorously, candidly, and publicly."<sup>21</sup>

Fulbright was a principled and independent senator who called on the United States to live up to its highest ideals. His statesmanship was rooted in courage and wisdom. Fulbright grasped that America is strongest when it adheres to its professed values and advances them forcefully but also modestly, mindful of the "arrogance of power." His tough-minded reassessment of the Vietnam War was bold and pivotal. His sponsorship of an international educational exchange program was inspired and has generated decades of good will for the United States.

## PHILIP HART



*Certainly those of us who hoped the programs of the 1960s would be effective in reducing poverty and hunger and improving schools and housing and health have reasons to be discouraged with the results of some of those programs, but not with the goals we sought. Those of us who hoped to close the gap between the many at the lower end of the economic scale and the affluent few during the years of economic expansion have reason to be disappointed by the failure to achieve any real change, but not with the goal. Those of us who believed that the time had come when we could at last deliver on the promise of our founding fathers that all persons were created equal have reason to be discouraged by the discrimination still with us, but not with the goal.*

Philip Hart, open letter to Michigan news outlets, December 29, 1975.

A native of Pennsylvania, Philip Hart moved to Michigan to attend law school and later represented his adopted state in the U.S. Senate. Hart never chaired a Senate committee or served in a leadership position. However, he

achieved near legendary status in American politics for his intellect, decency, courage, and determination to “give a voice to the voiceless.” Journalist Mary McGrory wrote of Hart that “if they could build his qualities...into the walls we would have a Senate that would astound the world with its civility and enlightenment.”<sup>22</sup>

Elected to the Senate in 1958, Hart was willing to disagree with his strongest political supporters on consequential matters. Hart implored leaders in the auto industry, who were based in his home state of Michigan, to build safer and more fuel efficient cars even when they insisted it would weaken their profit margins and damage the state’s economy. He pressed for comprehensive gun control legislation despite opposition from hunters at home. A passionate advocate for civil rights, Hart supported busing to integrate public schools. This infuriated some of his constituents and even sparked a recall petition to oust him from the Senate.

Hart opposed a powerful Democratic colleague, Senator James Eastland of Mississippi, in his 1972 bid to become the Senate’s *president pro tempore*. “I believe Jim Eastland would be an excellent president pro tem but an outrageous president,” Hart said, arguing that Eastland’s racial views were disqualifying for someone in the line of presidential succession. Hart’s speech to the Senate was the only dissenting voice against Eastland. Later, Eastland praised Hart’s honesty and integrity, saying, “I have never known a man I have been more apart from philosophically but close to personally. He is a man of principle, courage and intellectual honesty.”<sup>23</sup>

The inscription on the Senate office building that bears his name describes Hart this way: “A man of incorruptible integrity and personal courage strengthened by inner grace and outer gentleness, he elevated politics to a level of purity that will forever be an example to every elected official. He advanced the cause for human justice, promoted the welfare of the common man and improved the quality of life. His humanity and ethics earned him his place as the conscience of the Senate.”

Hart’s statesmanship was quiet, steady, and persistent. He fought for civil rights, consumer protections, and the environment. He waged legislative battles with passion and civility. Hart was both brave and kind. He relentlessly focused on his conception of the national interest, even when his views angered his supporters. “Your obligation,” he said simply, “really is to the public.”

## BARBARA JORDAN



***My faith in the Constitution is whole; it is complete; it is total. And I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction, of the Constitution...If the impeachment provision in the Constitution of the United States will not reach the offenses charged here, then perhaps that 18th-century Constitution should be abandoned to a 20th-century paper shredder.***

Barbara Jordan, statement to the House Judiciary Committee, July 25, 1974.

A trailblazing leader from Houston, Barbara Jordan cut her political teeth in Texas during John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign. She served in the Texas State Senate in the mid-1960s and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1972. She was the first black state senator in Texas and the first woman, and black person, elected to Congress from Texas. Jordan was an accomplished legislator who endeavored to solve practical problems and enunciate timeless truths.

She rose to national prominence during the 1974 impeachment hearings

of President Richard Nixon with her stirring affirmation of the Constitution and a powerful statement about her responsibility as a lawmaker. “We are trying to be big because the task we have before us is a big one,” she said.<sup>24</sup> Jordan later summarized the lessons she learned during the Watergate crisis to students at Howard University. “Reaffirm what ought to be. Get back to truth; that’s old but get back to it. Get back to what’s honest; tell government to do that. Affirm the civil liberties of the people of this country. Do that.”<sup>25</sup>

Jordan delivered a riveting keynote address at the 1976 Democratic Convention, proclaiming that her prominent role as a black woman at the convention was “one additional bit of evidence that the American Dream need not forever be deferred.” Jordan also used this dramatic occasion to frame the challenge the United States confronted. “We are a people in a quandary about the present. We are a people in search of a future. We are a people in search of national community,” she declared. “We are attempting to fulfill our national purpose, to create and sustain a society in which all of us are equal.”

She retired from Congress after three terms and became a professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. She pledged to help prepare the next generation to serve the country. Reflecting on her career, Jordan remarked that she tried to serve “on a plane higher than politics,” adding “it’s politics which keeps us reluctant to do the things we could boldly do.”<sup>26</sup>

Jordan’s statesmanship was undergirded by her deep understanding of, and reverence for, the Constitution. She described the 1974 impeachment crisis in elevated and inspiring terms, reminding Americans of their nation’s foundational principles. Her public service was both practical and aspirational.

## HOWARD BAKER JR.



***We are doing the business of the American people. We do it every day. We have to do it with the same people every day. And if we cannot be civil to one another, and if we stop dealing with those with whom we disagree, or that we don't like, we would soon stop functioning altogether...The founders didn't require a nation of supermen to make this government and this country work, but only honorable men and women laboring honestly and diligently and creatively in their public and private capacities.***

Howard Baker Jr., speech to the Leader's Lecture Series, July 14, 1998.

The son of a congressman, in 1966 Howard Baker became the first Republican elected to the U.S. Senate from Tennessee since Reconstruction. Baker was a moderate-to-conservative Republican who broke with many of his GOP colleagues on civil rights, fair housing, environmental regulation, and the Equal Rights Amendment. In 1978 as the Senate Republican leader, Baker supported Democratic President Jimmy Carter's proposed treaty with Panama that would eventually relinquish American control over the Panama

Canal. The treaty was not popular among Republicans and Baker observed that it was “an unwelcome challenge” for the treaty to be considered by the Senate as he was running for re-election at home and preparing a bid for his party’s 1980 presidential nomination.

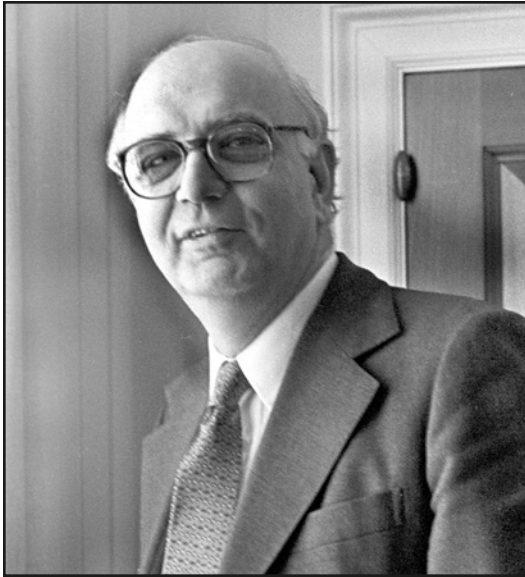
Baker set aside his personal ambitions and worked with Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd to conduct a rigorous and fair-minded study of the treaty. Baker helped secure Senate approval of the treaty knowing that it would hurt him politically. Byrd noted that Baker’s support was necessary and decisive. “Courage? That’s Howard Baker and the Panama Canal,” Byrd said.<sup>27</sup>

Baker retired from the Senate in 1985 and was preparing to run for the 1988 Republican presidential nomination when President Ronald Reagan asked him to serve as his White House chief of staff. Reagan was then entangled in the Iran-Contra scandal that threatened to derail his presidency. Baker set aside his presidential ambitions, accepted the thankless job, and helped stabilize the Reagan administration.

Baker later explained how he balanced his responsibilities as a politician and legislator. “I’m a lifelong and proud Republican. Unlike some, however, I don’t believe loyalty to party precludes commonsense decision and policy making. Some of our Nation’s greatest triumphs have come when political leaders have not allowed partisan differences to deter their efforts to find solutions that are in the Nation’s best interest.”<sup>28</sup>

Baker’s statesmanship was reflected in his willingness to subordinate personal ambitions and to work constructively with colleagues and presidents from both parties. His fairness and civility made him especially effective.

## PAUL VOLCKER



***Government is here to stay. Whether smaller or larger, it needs to be reasonably managed. More than that, it should be capable of maintaining trust and pride in our governance and in our democratic processes. How else can we expect to again become a beacon of hope for a troubled world?***

Paul Volcker, speech to the Foreign Policy Association, March 3, 2016.

The son of Teaneck, New Jersey's city manager, Paul Volcker grew into a highly skilled statesman who shaped the American economy for more than half a century and left a powerful legacy of accomplishment and competence. Volcker served as a senior Treasury official in the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations. He became a leader of the Federal Reserve System, first as the president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank and then as the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board from 1979 to 1987. As Fed Chairman, Volcker led the consequential and politically charged fight to combat soaring inflation that was destabilizing the United States and the world. He implemented tight money policies to curtail inflationary pressures and



received muted support and sometimes sharp opposition from Presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and Congress. But he persisted and succeeded.

Volcker also offered bracing—and often unwelcome—advice to administration officials and Congress about reducing federal budget deficits and enacting financial regulatory reforms. Ben Bernanke, one of his successors as Fed Chairman, said Volcker was a historic and admirable leader: “He came to represent independence. He personified the idea of doing something politically unpopular but economically necessary.”<sup>29</sup>

After leaving government, Volcker was selected to lead several high-profile investigations because of his reputation for fairness. Volcker examined the UN’s oil-for-food program in Iraq, allegations of corruption at the World Bank, Arthur Andersen’s accounting failures at Enron, and claims by victims of the Holocaust against Swiss banks. As a private citizen, Volcker was a stalwart defender of public service. He chaired the National Commission on Public Service in 1987 and a successor panel in 2003. In 2013 he created a coalition of business, government, and academic leaders to promote effective government management. He argued that public administration in the United States was not receiving the support and respect it deserved. He linked honest and competent public management to trust in government and warned that decreasing faith in government “is silently but pervasively weakening the foundation of our society.”

Volcker was a statesman who developed and implemented policies that were often unpopular but established the foundation for decades of economic growth with low inflation. Volcker was also a passionate and steadfast champion of public service, arguing that such service is a national resource that requires constant nurturing.

## RICHARD LUGAR



***The best leaders unite us. They avoid succumbing to the temptation to rely exclusively on party talking points and they are open to the possibility that someone from the other party may have a good idea. They recognize that there is inherent value in building consensus for policies beyond the 51 percent necessary to pass a bill. They understand that the benefits of purely partisan victories tend to be hard to sustain, while broadly supported initiatives have staying power. And they don't compromise on political civility, even when they know inflammatory rhetoric might gain them a headline.***

Richard Lugar, speech to the Edgar Fellows program,  
University of Illinois, August 4, 2015.

A native of Indiana, Richard Lugar was a Rhodes Scholar, naval intelligence officer, farmer, and small business executive before entering politics. A successful and even visionary mayor of Indianapolis, Lugar was elected to the Senate in 1976.

Soft-spoken, deliberate, and purposeful, Lugar served in the upper cham-

ber for thirty-six years and worked with presidents and lawmakers from both parties to solve complicated problems. A two-time chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Lugar supported arms control, combatted the spread of weapons of mass destruction, crafted progressive energy policies, and made the machinery of American foreign policy operate. The Republican senator's landmark accomplishment was the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Initiative in which he partnered with Democratic senator Sam Nunn on a bold program to secure and dismantle weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union after its dissolution.

Lugar clashed with President Ronald Reagan in the mid-1980s over imposing economic sanctions on South Africa. Lugar believed sanctions were needed to pressure that government to end its apartheid policies. When Reagan resisted, Lugar led the successful Senate effort to override the president's veto of sanctions legislation. He acknowledged that it was unsettling to break with his party's president on the matter but concluded it was his obligation to do so.

More than two decades later, Lugar endorsed an arms control treaty with Russia that was negotiated by Democratic President Barack Obama. Lugar judged that the treaty was in America's security interests and he advocated for Senate approval despite strong opposition from most other Republicans. In explaining his support for the treaty, Lugar concluded, "We are talking today about the national security of the United States of America."<sup>30</sup>

Lugar's claim to statesmanship is based on decades of skilled and selfless public service, often in arcane areas such as arms control in which there are few political rewards. He grasped the existential threat the United States and the world faced regarding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and crafted creative policies to confront this problem. The response of policymakers to any issue should be a "sober reflection on what is good for the country," Lugar insisted.

## LEE HAMILTON



***Those in the majority can always come up with reasons for taking shortcuts that allow it to act. That's not the point. The point is that in our democracy, the process is every bit as important as the legislation it produces. Fairness and trust should be the coin of the realm. Congress represents everyone, not just those who voted for members who happen to form the majority.***

Lee Hamilton, *Strengthening Congress*, 2009.

Lee Hamilton was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1964 as a Democrat from a district in southern Indiana. Hamilton served in Congress for thirty-four years, distinguishing himself as a serious and fair-minded lawmaker and a foreign policy expert. A firm believer in Congress's role as a separate and co-equal branch of government, Hamilton worked with both Democratic and Republican presidents. As the chairman of several powerful House committees, Hamilton respectfully, but insistently, pressed executive branch officials to explain their administration's policies. Congress, Hamilton argued, "has a responsibility to be both an informed critic and a constructive

partner of the president.”

Hamilton’s probity was on display during the politically explosive Iran-Contra hearings in 1987 that investigated the Reagan Administration’s decision to trade arms for hostages with Iran and then divert funds for illegal purposes in Central America. Hamilton presided judiciously over the hearings, seeking facts rather than scoring political points. After one witness lectured the committee on bravery and patriotism, Hamilton responded firmly and memorably. “But there’s another form of patriotism, which is unique to democracy. It resides in those of us who have a deep respect for the rule of law and faith in America’s democratic traditions. To uphold our Constitution requires not the exceptional efforts of the few, but the confidence and trust and the work of the many.”<sup>31</sup>

Since leaving Congress, Hamilton has served on prominent fact-finding commissions and conducted himself with integrity and professionalism. He was widely commended as the vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission, a panel tasked with determining how the 2001 terrorist attacks happened and offering proposals to prevent a future tragedy. Several years later, Hamilton served effectively as the co-chairman of the Iraq Study Group. The panel assessed the war in Iraq and outlined a plan for the United States to stabilize the region and then depart the conflict.

Hamilton’s statesmanship is anchored in his commitment to fairness, candor, and effective governance. Often laboring outside the limelight, Hamilton has understood that how the government resolves issues is as important as the outcome. He has emphasized the importance of adhering to established rules and procedures and working with members of both parties to develop enduring and credible policies. “Democracy after all is a process, not a result. Americans need to see that process,” Hamilton said.<sup>32</sup>

## ADDITIONAL STATESMEN CANDIDATES

The United States has been blessed with other leaders who have consistently displayed vision, courage, compassion, effectiveness and civility. In addition to those discussed, credible candidates for the designation of statesmen include: *Presidents*: Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, and George H.W. Bush; *First Lady* Eleanor Roosevelt; *Secretaries of State*: Dean Acheson (Truman administration), George Shultz (Reagan administration), and James Baker (George H.W. Bush administration); *Cabinet secretaries*: Labor Secretary Frances Perkins (Franklin Roosevelt administration), Attorney General Hebert Brownell (Eisenhower administration), and Attorney General Elliot Richardson (Nixon administration); *Senators*: Mike Mansfield of Montana, Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, Henry Jackson of Washington, Sam Nunn of Georgia, Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, John McCain of Arizona, Daniel Moynihan of New York, Robert Dole of Kansas, Paul Douglas, Everett Dirksen, and Paul Simon of Illinois, and Albert Gore Jr. of Tennessee; *House members*: Barber Conable of New York, Abner Mikva of Illinois, and John Dingell of Michigan; and *Supreme Court Justices*: Louis Brandeis, Earl Warren, and Sandra Day O'Connor.





## BARRIERS TO STATESMANSHIP

Given these examples from American history, an obvious question is why there seem to be so few statesmen in current politics and government? What factors make it difficult for leaders to be statesmen in modern America? Statesmanship has never been easy; now it seems exceptionally rare and profoundly difficult. Why?

A subsequent report will consider these questions in greater detail, but several preliminary observations deserve examination and reflection.

**The ideal and the aspiration of statesmanship has faded from American life.**

The word statesman has assumed a quaint, even archaic connotation, more relevant to history books than contemporary American political discourse. While many public officials seek to be influential leaders, few explain or defend their careers in the context of statesmanship. Leadership values now in ascendancy are charisma, forcefulness, charm, message discipline, and rapid response rather than vision, courage, compassion, effectiveness, and civility. While Americans often talk about leadership, we often don't appreciate or reward the values that comprise statesmanship. Americans seem to have forgotten what statesmanship is. Consequently we must confront important questions: How do we help Americans appreciate, respect, and reward statesmanship? How do we persuade current leaders, especially young leaders, to aspire to be statesmen? How do we train current leaders to become statesmen?

**The increasingly fast-paced nature of politics and government militates against statesmanship.**

For a statesman, the test of success is measured over years, and even decades, not news cycles. Statesmanship demands careful thought, courageous action, and a long-term view. "Legacy. What is a legacy? It's planting seeds in



a garden you never get to see,” says Alexander Hamilton in the musical *Hamilton*. This perspective seems absent from American political life where the urgent too often displaces the important—or what’s worse, is often mistaken for it.

**The hyper-partisan and sharply polarized political environment makes statesmanship very difficult.**

Efforts to reach across the political aisle or to fashion independent policies are often rebuked, and even penalized, by party leaders and partisan supporters. There are few incentives for constructive cooperation and little reward for bipartisan compromise. In the United States there now is a diminished sense that we are one nation but rather a riven political system with warring Democratic and Republican factions.

**The media environment is driven by ratings with an intense focus on conflict rather than conciliation, compromise, and incremental progress.**

Talk radio, cable television, and the Internet have helped foster a climate in which public affairs seems to be a pitched battle and a zero-sum contest in which one party’s success can only occur if the other party is defeated. Little attention, recognition, or praise is conferred on those who try to anticipate problems or craft modest, but critical, reforms. As some media outlets have grown sharply partisan, there is no longer any common set of stipulated facts to guide and discipline political discussions.

**The infusion of vast sums of money into the political process is causing serious distortions and complications for statesmanship.**

It is very difficult for lawmakers, who spend large parts of their days fundraising, to cast politically dangerous votes or make risky decisions. Raising the sums of money now needed in American politics is distracting, even consuming. Private interests are often protected and promoted by teams of lobbyists with large budgets while there are relatively few advocates for statesmen.

## **The explosive rise and pervasive reach of social media does not encourage statesmanship.**

The scope and intensity of social media dramatically increases pressure on leaders and discourages careful deliberation. Lawmakers who try to work with colleagues from the other party, or even extend to them basic gestures of civility, are often rebuked on social media by partisan supporters who accuse them of being too accommodating. “A multiplicity of forces are pushing America toward greater polarization,” concludes one recent analysis. “But social media in the years since 2013 has become a powerful accelerant for anyone who wants to start a fire.”<sup>33</sup> Statesmanship rarely occurs during five-alarm partisan political fires.





## CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The most troubling barrier to statesmanship in the United States is the decline of citizenship and civic engagement as respected values. The United States certainly needs better leaders, but Americans also need to become better citizens who want, and even demand, better leaders. It has been said that in a democracy the people end up with the government and the leaders they deserve.

Citizenship is integral to American government. The United States Constitution uses the word “citizen” or “citizens” at least ten times.<sup>34</sup> It was an important concept for our founders and should be for us.

The decline in citizenship and civic engagement in the United States has been extensively chronicled and the lamentation repeated that Americans have become increasingly self-absorbed, partisan, and disengaged. The ethos of the civically active, socially aware, and constructive citizen has eroded. Only about half of all Americans who are eligible to vote in presidential elections do so. Far fewer vote in mid-term elections and in local and state elections. The public’s lack of knowledge about basic American history and government is alarming and our collective participation in civic affairs is disappointingly limited. A comprehensive report on the civic and political health of the United States argued that “citizen participation is integral to our form of government. To sustain itself, to meet challenges and thrive, democracy demands much from its citizens. At a minimum, citizens are charged with the selection of leadership in a representative government.”<sup>35</sup>

Fulfilling our obligations as citizens would help lower some of the barriers to statesmanship. For example:

### **Vote and support the voting rights of others.**

Voting is a foundational right and responsibility in a democracy. Unfortunately, too many Americans don’t appreciate this right or accept this responsi-

lity. In recent national elections, tens of millions of Americans who are eligible to vote, failed to register to vote. And tens of millions who are registered to vote, decide not to go to the polls on Election Day.<sup>36</sup> Americans are far less likely to vote than their counterparts in other industrial nations. Americans should vote in national, state and local elections. We should also encourage family, friends and acquaintances to vote. On Election Day, we should volunteer to take people to the polls who need assistance. We should support efforts that make it easier to vote in the United States by reforming overly complicated voting registration systems. “Voting is a civic sacrament,” long-time Notre Dame president Theodore Hesburgh once said. We must reinforce this perspective.

### **Be accurately informed about our country’s strengths, weaknesses, and global responsibilities.**

We clearly face no shortage of information. In fact, our problem is the opposite: a tidal wave of words, images, and data cascade at us. Our challenge is to sort through this barrage of information and make a sincere effort to understand facts and evaluate evidence. We should examine our assumptions and change opinions if the evidence warrants. We should seek out news sources that are rigorous, objective, and nonpartisan. We should reject inflammatory statements and attacks from highly partisan sources and seek out balanced and well-considered perspectives.

Citizens should read essays and books that illuminate our country’s political traditions in a broad and nuanced way and that provide context to evaluate future choices. Carefully written works of non-fiction tell important stories, introduce us to consequential people, describe our best traditions, and confirm that positive change is possible but often only after intense labor and disappointing setbacks. The discipline of serious reading forces us to slow down, think carefully, weigh evidence, and respect argument. This is crucial, especially given the pervasive influence of information on social media that is often inflammatory and inaccurate.

### **Actively participate in the civic and political life of our communities and country.**

Participation allows citizens to improve their communities and the country. It also offers the ancillary benefit of helping us better understand the

practical constraints that confront policymakers. Working on civic and political projects helps us appreciate the complexity of organizing and governing. It encourages us to support leaders who build coalitions and solve problems. There are many opportunities to participate and contribute: volunteering for community projects, joining service groups, voting in state, local, and national elections, working for candidates and causes, signing petitions, writing letters, and submitting opinion essays and posts.

### **Develop a mature sense of necessary leadership qualities.**

Americans have become too willing to accept the conventional emphasis on superficial characteristics such as charm, wit, and rapid response. We must learn to appreciate and reward virtues such as wisdom, steadiness, judgment, and reliability. We must resist the temptation to fall for what Historian Archie Brown calls “the myth of the strong leader.” Brown argues that what is conventionally hailed as strong leadership is not the same as good leadership. He warns that qualities such as integrity, collegiality, judgment, empathy, curiosity, and the ability to absorb complex and often contradictory information, are too often undervalued.<sup>37</sup>

### **Elevate our standards for what constitutes acceptable political and governmental behavior and hold our own party’s leaders to an even higher standard than others.**

During this angry and polarized time, it is tempting to emphasize the foibles and inconsistencies of the other side and look away when our party engages in inappropriate or disappointing behavior. Recent surveys show that partisans demand a higher standard of conduct from the other party than they do of their own. The opposite should be true. We should expect more from ourselves and our party than our political adversaries.

How do we revive the ideal of citizenship and civic engagement? There are no magic answers but there are hopeful strategies that deserve study.

First, we should intensify our efforts to teach American history, government, and civics in schools. Classroom work should be complemented by practical service projects beginning at a very young age. We should look at creative initiatives such as the *iCivics* program launched by former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor as a promising way to make our history,

politics, and government interesting and accessible.

Second, we should expand access to unconventional approaches that teach American history and politics. The theatrical sensation *Hamilton* has been a powerfully important teaching tool as has the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's *American Revolutions: The United States History Cycle* series which has produced magnificent plays such as *All The Way* and *The Great Society* about President Lyndon Johnson. The HBO mini-series, *John Adams*, and PBS specials such as *American Creed* by David M. Kennedy and Condoleezza Rice also deepen our appreciation of American history.

Third, we should study cities and states that have successfully developed programs to increase civic participation and see if these programs can be adapted for the rest of United States. Colorado, for example, has been praised for increasing voter turnout and fostering a less contentious political environment. Its programs deserve careful review.

Fourth, we should seriously consider creating a one year national service requirement in the United States for those between the ages of 18 and 28. At a minimum, we should build support for universal voluntary national service in the United States along the lines proposed by the Franklin Project. This project envisions making a year of full-time national service a cultural norm and a civic right of passage for every young American. Such a service culture would foster a sense of community in the United States and restore the notion that citizenship confers benefits and responsibilities. Service obligations could be met by joining the military or civilian programs such as the Peace Corps, Teach for America, or AmeriCorps.



## WE ARE BETTER THAN THIS

The United States is enduring a fraught time. The nation seems to have lost contact with its best traditions and instincts. Many of our young people believe the current state of political and civic affairs is the norm rather than a departure from American history.

The United States is much better than this. The country has met greater challenges than those we now confront and emerged from them vibrant and purposeful. We need only consider the Depression era when unemployment exceeded 25 percent, millions lived in abject poverty, and another global war loomed. “Looking back on those days, I wonder how we ever lived through them,” wrote Frances Perkins, President Franklin Roosevelt’s Secretary of Labor. But Perkins and her contemporaries did live through them, solved hard problems, created institutions and traditions, and bequeathed to us a magnificent country.

Reform and renewal will not happen automatically. As Martin Luther King wrote in his Birmingham letter, time doesn’t magically solve problems, determined people do. Political and social progress is almost always propelled by wise and courageous leaders supported by responsible and active citizens.

The road to renewal is difficult but there is a way to begin. *We must restore statesmanship as an ideal and aspiration and citizenship as a goal and responsibility.* While we need individual statesmen, we especially need to build a pervasive and dynamic culture of statesmanship and citizenship in the United States. Grounding this culture in American history provides perspective, instruction and hope. “With countries as with individuals, a sense of proportion is essential,” noted Historian Jon Meacham. “All has seemed lost before, only to give way, after decades of gloom, to light. And that is in large measure because, in the battle between the impulses of good and evil in the American soul, what Lincoln called ‘the better angels of our nature’ have prevailed just often enough to keep the national enterprise alive.”<sup>38</sup>



The concepts of statesmanship and citizenship can seem abstract and elusive. As we evaluate leaders and assess their credentials as *statesmen*, we should ask fundamental questions and seek concrete evidence about them.

- Is their first instinct to approach a policy challenge by asking what is in the public interest?
- Do they have long-term plans that they are able to describe?
- Do they have a record of anticipating and addressing future challenges?
- Are they willing to break from their party and act independently?
- Are they willing to cast difficult votes and make hard decisions?
- Do they support policies that ease suffering and provide opportunities?
- Are they responsible and civil in their public service?
- Are they open to debate and respectful exchanges?
- Are they able to work with others and reach constructive compromises?
- Have they earned the respect and trust of their colleagues and constituents? If so, how?
- Are they willing to consider opposing views and admit errors?
- Are they willing to adjust their thinking as circumstances change and additional evidence becomes available?
- Do they reason persuasively and communicate clearly when explaining their views?
- Do they believe that members of the other party can contribute to good policy and do they include them in their deliberations?
- Are they willing to disagree with their constituents and explain why?

As we think about *citizenship and civic engagement*, we should ask ourselves challenging questions:

- Do I vote?
- Do I discuss politics with others and encourage them to vote?
- Do I volunteer for civic organizations?
- Do I volunteer for candidates or political parties?
- Do I contact public officials to express opinions and ask questions?
- Do I express my opinions after careful study?
- Do I sign petitions?
- Do I study issues and strive to be well informed?

- Do I attend civic meetings and participate in community events?
- Do I listen to the views of members of both parties?
- Do I hold my party to higher standard than the other party?

We urgently need a renewal of statesmanship in the United States in which elevated leaders and responsible citizens confront serious problems and unify the nation. Enlightened statesmen and committed citizens are required to make our political system function and tackle the daunting problems that have accumulated. We need to begin by recalling our best traditions, raising our expectations of our leaders, embracing our responsibilities as citizens, and drawing inspiration from those who came before us.

“For in a democracy,” John F. Kennedy wrote, “every citizen, regardless of his interest in politics, ‘holds office’; every one of us is in a position of responsibility; and in the final analysis, the kind of government we get depends upon how we fulfill those responsibilities. We, the people are the boss, and we will get the kind of political leadership, good or bad, that we demand and deserve.”<sup>39</sup>



# NOTES AND REFERENCES

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# RECOMMENDED READING

## LEADERSHIP

*Leadership* by James MacGregor Burns, Perennial, 1978.

*The Myth of the Strong Leader: Political Leadership in the Modern Age* by Archie Brown, Basic Books, 2014.

*Leadership in American Politics*, edited by Jeffrey Jenkins and Craig Volden, University of Kansas Press, 2017.

*Profiles in Leadership: Historians on the Elusive Quality of Greatness*, edited by Walter Isaacson, W.W. Norton, 2010.

*Leadership In Turbulent Times* by Doris Kearns Goodwin, Simon & Schuster, 2018.

*Indispensable: When Leaders Really Matter* by Gautam Mukunda, Harvard Business Review Press, 2012.

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*George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century* by Mark A. Stoler, Simon & Schuster, 1989.

*Arthur Vandenberg: The Man in the Middle of the American Century* by Hendrik Meijer, University of Chicago Press, 2017.

*No Place for a Woman: A Life of Senator Margaret Chase Smith* by Janann Sherman, Rutgers University Press, 2000.

*Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* by David Garrow, William Morrow, 1999.

*Fulbright: A Biography* by Randall Bennett Woods, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

*Philip Hart: The Conscience of the Senate* by Michael O'Brien, Michigan State University, 1995.

*Barbara Jordan: A Self-Portrait* by Barbara Jordan and Shelby Hearon, Doubleday, 1979.

*Howard Baker: Conciliator in an Age of Crises* by James Annis, Madison Books, 1994.

*Keeping At It: The Quest for Sound Money and Good Government* by Paul Volcker with Christine Harper, PublicAffairs, 2018.

*Richard G. Lugar, Statesman of the Senate* by John T. Shaw, Indiana University Press, 2012.

*Strengthening Congress* by Lee Hamilton, Indiana University Press, 2009.

## ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL READING

The following books provide an excellent historical context for Americans to reflect on the challenges now confronting their country. These books affirm that the United States is a resilient country and many who have gone before us have endured—and overcome—considerable hardships.

*A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution* by Carol Berkin, Harcourt, 2002.

Berkin is a professor of American history at the City University of New York and Baruch College. This book describes how an effort to fix the Articles of Confederation morphed into a negotiation that resulted in a new Constitution. *A Brilliant Solution* chronicles how chaotic and fiercely contested the drafting of this document was in the summer of 1787 in Philadelphia. Nothing was certain when the Constitutional Convention began and failure was a distinct possibility. Deep divisions persisted during the convention between those who supported a strong federal government and those who wanted the states to retain substantial powers. The final Constitution was an elegant com-



promise that emerged from a messy and unpredictable process. Berkin makes it clear that not everything in the Constitution has worked out as the founders intended. For example, they were determined to create a government in which the legislative branch was more powerful than the executive. This was once the case but clearly no longer is. “The founding fathers did not expect their constitution to endure for centuries,” Berkin concludes. “They could not predict the social, economic, or technological changes produced by the generations that followed them. Perhaps their ultimate wisdom, and their ultimate achievement, was their willingness to subject the Constitution they created to amendment. With this gesture—a true leap of faith—they freed future generations from the icy grip of the past.”

*Eisenhower in War and Peace* by Jean Edward Smith, Random House, 2012.

Dwight Eisenhower was a solid but unspectacular West Point graduate from America’s Heartland. He grew into a world-class military leader who helped win World War II and then served for two terms as the president of the United States. Smith, who was one of America’s preeminent biographers and historians, depicts Eisenhower as a man of decency, force, intelligence, moderation, and competence. He argues that except for Franklin Roosevelt, Eisenhower was the most successful president of the 20th century. Smith credits Ike for ending a three-year stalemated war in Korea, resisting calls for preventive war against the Soviet Union and China, deploying the Seventh Fleet to protect Formosa (Taiwan) from invasion, facing down Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev over Berlin, moving the Republican Party from its isolationist wing, balancing the federal budget, and building the interstate highway system. Smith argues that Eisenhower understood the demands of leadership although he often concealed his political acumen. “All of his life Eisenhower managed crises without overreacting. He made every task he undertook look easy. Ike’s military experience taught him that an outward display of casualness inspired confidence, and he took that lesson into the White House,” Smith writes.

*Truman* by David McCullough, Simon & Schuster, 1992.

This Pulitzer Prize-winning biography by one of America's most popular writers introduced President Harry Truman to a generation of Americans. Few stories are more remarkable than Truman's maturation from a mostly obscure senator to a mostly obscure vice president to a magnificent president. Following the death of Franklin Roosevelt, Truman served in the White House during a critical time in American history, confronted the sternest challenges imaginable, and handled them successfully. He created the institutions that allowed the United States and the West to eventually win the Cold War: the Marshall Plan, NATO, and the U.S. national security apparatus with the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, and other agencies. Truman also sent Congress the first civil rights message by an American president and desegregated the armed forces. "Ambitious by nature, he was never torn by ambition, never tried to appear as something he was not," McCullough writes of Truman. "As much as any president since Lincoln, he brought to the highest office the language and values of the common American people. He held to the old guidelines: work hard, do your best, assume no airs, trust in God, have no fear. Yet he was not and had never been a simple, ordinary man. The homely attributes, the Missouri wit, the warmth of his friendship, the genuineness of Harry Truman, however appealing, were outweighed by the larger qualities that made him a figure of world stature, both a great and good man, and a great American President."

*The China Mission: George Marshall's Unfinished War, 1945-1947* by Daniel Kurtz-Phelan, W.W. Norton, 2018.

George Marshall is a quiet giant in American history. He served as the Army chief of staff who organized the American victory in World War II and later as Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. He also won the Nobel Peace Prize. Truman called him "the greatest military man this country ever produced--or any other country produced." *Time* magazine, when selecting him as "Man of the Year" in January of 1948, said Americans "trust General Marshall more than they have trusted any military man since George Washington." *The China Mission* chronicles Marshall's impossible quest to broker an agreement between China's warring communist and nationalist forces. Even in failure, Marshall emerges as honorable, creative, dogged, and devoted to

duty. Kurtz-Phelan, executive editor of *Foreign Affairs*, offers a meticulous account of Marshall's diplomacy as he tried to forge a peace deal between two sides who ultimately did not want an agreement. "It is a story not of possibility and ambition, but of limits and restraint; not of a victory achieved at any cost, but of a kind of failure ultimately accepted as the best of terrible options," Kurtz-Phelan writes. "Marshall came away with a more limited sense of America's place in the story. A master of self-control, here he came to terms with what could not be controlled; a can-do man in a can-do era, here he learned what could not be done—the hardest part of strategy. Yet that did not mean settling into fatalism. Marshall also returned home with a deeper sense of what it would take to succeed in the larger struggle just beginning." Kurtz-Phelan portrays Marshall as a remarkable man who was respected "not so much for the brilliance of his insight as quality of judgment."

*Lincoln* by David Herbert Donald, Simon & Schuster, 1995.

Abraham Lincoln remains the towering figure in American political life and our archetypal statesman. Donald, a revered Lincoln scholar and biographer, shows Lincoln's large spirt, clear intelligence, implacable will, and deep humanity. He describes Lincoln's striking and inspiring capacity for growth which enabled one of the least experienced and most poorly prepared men ever elected to high office to become America's greatest president. Donald sees Lincoln as a man of ambition, vision, and tactical shrewdness. "The pilots on our Western rivers steer from point to point as they call it—setting the course of the boat no farther than they can see and that is all I propose to myself in this great problem," Lincoln once told a lawmaker who asked about the president's post Civil War plans for the United States. Donald also depicts Lincoln's flaws such as his sometimes passive and reactive approach to problems. "I claim not to have controlled events but confess plainly that events have controlled me," he once acknowledged. However, Lincoln's wisdom, decency, vision, and persistence ultimately prevailed. Few nations can claim a leader of Lincoln's stature as part of their historical inheritance.

*The Walls of Jericho: Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Richard Russell, and the Struggle for Civil Rights* by Robert Mann, Harcourt, 1996.

Mann, a former Senate aide, offers a compelling account of the struggle to enact civil rights legislation, from the bitterly divisive 1948 Democratic Convention to the passage of the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Years of stalemate and failure preceded these successes. Mann hones in on three of the dominant players in this drama: Senator Hubert Humphrey, a passionate and relentless advocate for sweeping civil rights legislation, Senator Richard Russell, a fierce and formidable opponent, and Lyndon Johnson, the senator and then president who helped secure the critical legislative victories. Mann details Russell's unrelenting battle to defeat civil rights initiatives but also makes the important point that once civil rights legislation became the law of the land, Russell implored all Americans to respect these laws. "I have no apologies to anyone for the fight I made. I only regret that we did not prevail. But these statutes are now on the books, and it becomes our duty as good citizens to live with them," Russell said. Mann argues that passing civil rights and voting rights legislation was important, but they were just a first step. "The easy part was over," he writes. "Congress had finally enacted powerful legislation to guarantee the civil and voting rights of all black Americans. Enforcing those new rights would be difficult, but not as daunting as the task of creating and nurturing an economic and social environment in which black citizens could achieve the American dream of economic independence and prosperity."

*The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson, Random House, 2010.

This book chronicles the historic migration between 1915 and 1970 of millions of African-Americans from the South to the Midwest, the Northeast, and the West. Wilkerson is a former *New York Times* reporter and journalism professor. "Over the course of six decades, some six million black southerners left the land of their forefathers and fanned across the country for an uncertain existence in nearly every other corner of America," Wilkerson writes. "The Great Migration would become a turning point in history. It would transform urban America and recast the social and political order of every city it touched. It would force the South to search its soul and finally

to lay aside a feudal caste system.” Wilkerson focuses on the stories of three people who illuminate this larger drama: Ida Mae Brandon Gladney, the wife of a sharecropper who moved from Mississippi in the 1930s for Chicago; George Swanson Starling, a laborer who left Florida in the 1940s for New York City; and Robert Joseph Pershing Foster, a doctor who departed from Louisiana in the early 1950s for Los Angeles. Their stories highlight this critical demographic event in American life and also offer inspiring examples of resilience. *The Warmth of Other Suns* serves as a compliment to *The Walls of Jericho*. Wilkerson’s protagonists benefited from civil rights and voting rights legislation, but also endured discrimination and employment challenges. “Over the decades, perhaps the wrong questions have been asked about the Great Migration,” Wilkerson concludes. “Perhaps it is not a question of whether the migrants brought good or ill to the cities they fled to or were pushed or pulled to their destinations, but a question of how they summoned the courage to leave in the first place or how they found the will to press beyond the forces against them and the faith in the country that had rejected them for so long. By their actions, they did not dream the American Dream, they willed it into being by a definition of their own choosing.”

*The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam* by Barbara W. Tuchman, Random House, 1984.

Tuchman was one of America’s great narrative historians and in this book she explores why governments throughout history have so often acted in ways that have been harmful to their own interests. She examines four episodes: the Trojan decision to accept a Greek horse into its city, the failure of six Renaissance popes to effectively deal with the Reformation, King George III’s mistakes that fueled the American Revolution, and America’s debacle in Vietnam. Tuchman argues that in all of these cases, leaders were warned against their courses of action, they had feasible alternatives, and critical mistakes were made by groups not just one misguided person. “A phenomenon noticeable throughout history regardless of place or period is the pursuit by governments of policies contrary to their own interests. Mankind, it seems, makes a poorer performance of government than of almost any other human activity,” Tuchman writes. “Why do holders of high office so often act contrary to the way reason points and enlightened self-interest suggests? Why does intelligent

mental process seem so often not to function?” Tuchman does not find clear answers to her questions, but observes that self-deception “is a factor that plays a remarkably large role in government. It consists in assessing a situation in terms of preconceived fixed notions while ignoring or rejecting any contrary signs.” Some critics have challenged Tuchman’s use of four very different historical examples as well as her definition of governmental folly but she raises profound questions that resonate today. Tuchman’s final chapter, “America Betrays Herself in Vietnam” is sobering, especially given that America’s disastrous experience in Vietnam did not lead to clearer thinking by policymakers when they launched wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

*A Political Education: A Washington Memoir* by Harry McPherson, University of Texas Press, 1972.

This masterpiece offers a penetrating and wry account of mid-20th century American politics and government. *A Political Education* also raises the possibility that behind the face of every dutiful congressional aide or presidential staffer is a writer of considerable insight and literary skill. McPherson provides an insider’s account of Washington political life in the 1950s and 1960s. A native of Texas, he moved to Washington to work for Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson and later served in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. McPherson offers a fascinating chronicle of his experiences and wonderful sketches of the participants in the dramas he observed. For example, he recalls that Senator John F. Kennedy in the 1950s was “elegant and casual” and “was treated with affection by most senators, but he was ultimately elusive, finding his way in other worlds outside the chamber. Mythically wealthy, handsome, bright and well connected, he seemed to regard the Senate grandees as impressive but tedious. In turn, he was regarded by them as something of a playboy, a dilettante... To (Lyndon) Johnson, I believe, he was the enviably attractive nephew who sings an Irish ballad for the company, and then winsomely disappears before the table-clearing and dishwashing begin.” In addition to the sheer fun of this book, *A Political Education* is valuable for its insights on Congress and the Presidency, especially LBJ’s presidency.

*The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972* by William Manchester, Little, Brown, 1974.

Manchester, a skilled journalist and historian, chronicles life in the United States from the Depression during the presidency of Hebert Hoover to Watergate under Richard Nixon. This narrative describes the politics of this era but also includes memorable descriptions of American life in the 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s. Manchester informs us about the books people read, the clothes they wore, the movies they watched, the music they listened to, the trips they took, the celebrities they followed, the companies they worked for, the churches they attended, and the cultural fads that influenced their lives. *The Glory and the Dream* is a vivid and nostalgic journey through important decades in American history. It transports us back in time while also raising larger issues about the country. "Change is a constant theme in the American past," Manchester writes. "The United States is the only nation in the world to worship change for its own sake and to regard change and progress as indistinguishable." He also detects a periodic "yearning to renounce the present and find restoration in the unconsummated past."

*Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* by David M. Kennedy, Oxford University Press, 1999.

An emeritus history professor at Stanford, David Kennedy combines scholarly rigor with enthralling prose in telling the story of the United States during one of the most consequential periods in its history, 1929 to 1945. Americans struggled to survive a brutal economic downturn only to be faced with one of the sternest challenges in world history: stopping and then reversing the rampages of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. At the center of this drama was one of America's most successful and enigmatic presidents, Franklin D. Roosevelt. FDR's New Deal and prosecution of World War II were complex and often messy endeavors but they ultimately succeeded, catapulting Roosevelt to the top tier of great American presidents. Kennedy argues that the Allied victory in World War II ushered in a new era in American life. "The war had shaken the American people loose and shaken them up, freed them from a decade of economic and social paralysis and flung them around their country into new regions and new ways of life. It was a war that so richly delivered on the promises of the wartime advertisers and politicians

that it nearly banished the memory of the Depression.”

*Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History* by Margaret MacMillan, Random House, 2008.

The Canadian-born warden of St. Anthony’s College in Oxford, MacMillan has written popular and highly regarded books on the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919, the British Raj, World War I, and Richard Nixon’s 1972 trip to China. In *Dangerous Games*, MacMillan argues that history should be read, studied, and savored. But it should be used cautiously when considering public policy. Examining the past is useful and sometimes edifying, she posits, but it does not provide a prescription for navigating the present or predicting future. Studying history allows you to delve into complex situations, evaluate leaders, and render informed judgments. It encourages you to ask hard questions, study evidence, and probe assumptions. “If the study of history does nothing more than teach us humility, skepticism, and awareness of ourselves, then it has done something useful,” she writes. MacMillan is concerned that some people, either through malice or sloppiness, use history in ways that are harmful. “History can be helpful; it can also be very dangerous,” she writes. “Sometimes we abuse history, creating one-sided or false histories to justify treating others badly, seizing their land, for example, or killing them. There are also many lessons and much advice offered by history, and it is easy to pick and choose what you want. The past can be used for almost anything you want to do in the present. “





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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John T. Shaw has served as the director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University since January 2018. Prior to that he worked for more than twenty-five years as a congressional and diplomatic correspondent in Washington, D.C. Shaw is the author of five books: *Rising Star, Setting Sun: Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and the Presidential Transition That Changed America*; *JFK in the Senate: Pathway to the Presidency*; *Richard G. Lugar, Statesman of the Senate*; *The Ambassador: Inside the Life of a Working Diplomat*; and *Washington Diplomacy: Profiles of People of World Influence*.

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