

## CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE PRESIDENCY

*Declaration on Civility and  
Inclusive Leadership*

THIRD EDITION

The coming years demand greatness from our nation's leaders and our citizens, as we navigate the significant domestic and international challenges that threaten our nation's security and long-term prosperity. The difficulty of this task is magnified by our country's political divisions, for today we are too much a house divided. Yet, if we unite to turn challenges into opportunities and pursue common goals, we surely will write another great chapter in America's history.

Civility and inclusive leadership are proven means of bridging political divisions and forging national unity and commitment. National resolve and unity of purpose are essential for marshalling the best talent, regardless of party affiliation, and are the elements required to develop a strategic consensus on the way forward.

Civility does not require citizens to give up cherished beliefs or "dilute" their convictions. Rather, it requires respect, listening, and trust when interacting with those who hold differing viewpoints. Indeed, civility and inclusive leadership have often been exercised in the American experience as a means of moving to higher, common ground and developing more creative approaches to realize shared aspirations.

Accordingly, the National Committee to Unite a Divided America strongly urges America's leaders to draw strength and wisdom from our nation's greatest achievements arising from inclusiveness and civility.

— AMBASSADORS DAVID ABSHIRE AND MAX KAMPELMAN  
Co-Chairmen, National Committee to Unite a Divided America.

# *Preamble*

## *Challenges*

WHEREAS, overseas, our nation's challenges include:

- ❖ The continuing war against terrorism worldwide, and maintaining civil liberties and the rule of law at home,
- ❖ Continued violence and instability in Afghanistan and Iraq, even while progress is made toward a democratic electoral process in both countries,
- ❖ The extended deployment of our Armed Forces, National Guard, and Reserves,
- ❖ Proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass effect,
- ❖ The prevalence of anti-Americanism around the world,

WHEREAS, at home, our challenges include:

- ❖ The need to strengthen the defense of the homeland and address vulnerabilities to natural disasters,
- ❖ Runaway healthcare costs and inequities in health insurance,
- ❖ Retirement of the baby-boom generation and the potential insolvency of Medicare and Social Security,
- ❖ Rising federal budget and trade deficits, with an over-reliance on foreign creditors,
- ❖ Threats to our energy security, especially heavy dependence on foreign oil supplies, and the need to address global climate change,

- ❖ The decline of our educational competitiveness in the face of world competition, especially in the fields of science, engineering, and mathematics, as well as the often unnecessary barriers to qualified foreign students seeking to study in the United States,
- ❖ An alarming decline in character-based leadership in parts of government, business, education, religious life, and athletics,

## *From Challenges to Opportunities*

WHEREAS to face these challenges successfully and capitalize on new opportunities, the nation must come together in the spirit of civility and shared commitment to marshal the best minds across political divides, actions that in the past have enabled Americans to realize some of our nation's greatest accomplishments, as exemplified by:

- ❖ The Constitutional Convention, during which President George Washington guided leaders of distinct and often opposing beliefs to find common ground in order to accomplish the near impossible — the creation of a new nation,
- ❖ The mobilization of American science and industry during World War II, made possible by the inclusive leadership of President Franklin Roosevelt, who brought Republicans into his Cabinet, appointed his rival, Wendell Willkie, as envoy, and selected independent-minded Vannevar Bush to marshal American science and research to the cause,
- ❖ The development of a long-term strategy to prevail in the Cold War under President Harry Truman, who engaged Republicans to create domestic consensus for the Marshall Plan, the Berlin airlift, and the creation of NATO,
- ❖ President John F. Kennedy's mobilization of American science and technology, along with the nation's collective will, to energize the space program and, in less than a decade, send a man to the moon, and

- ❖ The heroic sacrifices of first responders and volunteers across the nation on September 11th, along with America's exceptional resilience in the days afterwards, nurtured by President George W. Bush's immediate call for tolerance and unity across religious faiths and political affiliations,

WHEREAS American global leadership has been most effective when based on the principles of civility and inclusive leadership abroad, as demonstrated by:

- ❖ Beginning with President Harry Truman, the creation and performance, under strong but often indirect U.S. leadership of the North Atlantic Council, which has maintained a commitment to civility and respect for all views within the alliance, practices that allowed the Western democracies to maintain the unity of purpose needed to prevail in the Cold War,
- ❖ The peaceful transition from Cold War divisions to a predominantly united and free Europe, made possible in large measure by the inclusive leadership of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, who engaged allies and erstwhile adversaries to help bring Eastern Europe into the democratic fold,
- ❖ President George H. W. Bush's creation of a broad-based international coalition of 35 nations from across the world to drive Saddam Hussein's forces out of Kuwait during the 1990-1991 Gulf War,
- ❖ President Bill Clinton's success in building and maintaining support within NATO for the 1999 intervention in Kosovo to halt the mass expulsion and killing of ethnic Albanians by the regime of Slobodan Milosevic, and
- ❖ The marshalling of resources to assist victims of the December 2004 tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean, an enormous task enhanced by President George W. Bush's decision to task former Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton with mobilizing America's unparalleled network of private charities to assist in the disaster relief effort,

WHEREAS America's private and non-profit sectors, through independent initiatives and government-sponsored commissions, are indispensable for marshalling diverse expertise across ideological lines and for exploring innovative, sometimes contrarian, ideas,

AND RECALLING THAT, in the absence of strong leadership to forge unity of purpose, national disunity, as America experienced in the decades preceding the Civil War and during the Vietnam War, has led to some of the nation's greatest tragedies, for as President Lincoln said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand,"

## *Resolution*

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT WE, THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO UNITE A DIVIDED AMERICA, urge the President of the United States and Members of Congress to:

- ❖ Increase civility and inclusive leadership, while welcoming constructive advice and debate, to strengthen national unity of purpose and spirit,
- ❖ Marshal the best minds in America, regardless of party affiliation, and
- ❖ Develop bipartisan consultative mechanisms in order to promote consensus building and to ensure strategic coherence and creativity in U.S. policy,

AND, TO ADDRESS OUR IMMEDIATE WARTIME CHALLENGES, WE urge the President and the Congress to:

- ❖ Mobilize more public support for the men and women of the Armed Forces, National Guard, and Reserves, and increase awareness of the daily sacrifices of their families and employers back home,

- ❖ Accelerate efforts to marshal the expertise of the scientific and business communities to secure the nation's vulnerable infrastructure from terrorist attack (an effort already advanced by the outreach of the Department of Homeland Security), and
- ❖ Increase efforts to rally Americans of all political persuasions to accept broader shared sacrifice in order to advance the common objectives of securing peace and security in Afghanistan and Iraq and of securing the American homeland from attack,

AND, TO REVITALIZE AMERICA'S ROLE AS AN INDISPENSABLE GLOBAL LEADER, WE encourage the President and the Congress to:

- ❖ Build and strengthen international resolve, cooperation, and capabilities — especially through international organizations, beginning with the United Nations — to de-legitimize and prevent terrorism, halt the spread of weapons of mass effect, resolve current conflicts and prevent future acts of aggression, above all, genocide, respond effectively to natural disasters, and foster economic development,
- ❖ Encourage the world's richest nations to do more to alleviate extreme poverty and crushing health problems in the world's poorest nations,
- ❖ Fully exploit the diplomatic potential of Congress through the use of Congressional delegations overseas and joint parliamentary fora, such as the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and
- ❖ Strengthen America's ability to communicate with and engage other societies by reinvigorating public diplomacy across all federal agencies that communicate to audiences abroad and by integrating private sector expertise into this endeavor,

AND, ADDITIONALLY, WE urge our national leaders to cooperate with and support the nation's independent and university-based research and policy institutes, which are at the forefront of efforts to mobilize America's creative talent across political viewpoints in order to develop innovative solutions to our nation's challenges,

AND, FURTHERMORE, AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS, WE

- ❖ Urge Governors, Mayors, State Legislators, and Local Government Officials to initiate and participate in efforts to pull together the creative talent of our local communities in order to advance our shared objectives, and
- ❖ Encourage our nation's educators to develop new ways of instilling the spirit of civility, cooperation, and shared sacrifice in our leaders of tomorrow, from primary school to the graduate level,
- ❖ Pursue a robust national capability to respond to domestic crises, including stronger support for the National Guard and Reserve, domestic law enforcement, and first responders,

AND, FINALLY, WE remind our national leaders that they set the tone of our national discourse and set the example, for good or ill, that our young people will follow,

FOR, ABOVE ALL ELSE, at a time when the nation is at war and faces other vulnerabilities, the President, the Congress, and other national leaders must develop a strategic consensus for the way ahead and unite the American people in the spirit of civility and shared sacrifice, as was so evident immediately following the tragedy of September 11, 2001.

“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 . . . Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history.”

—Abraham Lincoln

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The National Committee to Unite a Divided America promotes a deeper understanding of how America has employed civility and inclusive leadership throughout history to overcome severe challenges and realize many of its greatest accomplishments. Using these lessons as a guide, the National Committee encourages our current national leaders to bridge political division and forge national unity of purpose as the nation navigates through a time of great challenges and opportunities.

## *Selected Publications: 1998-2008*

DAVID M. ABSHIRE, ed. *Triumphs and Tragedies of the Modern Presidency: Seventy-Six Case Studies in Presidential Leadership*. (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2001).

DAVID M. ABSHIRE, author:

1) *Saving the Reagan Presidency: Trust is the Coin of the Realm*. (Houston, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2005).

2) *A Call to Greatness: Challenging the Next President*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008)

3) *Crises of Character in Leadership*. Loyola University, Chicago, Morris Leibman Distinguished Lecture, published in conjunction with the CSIS Abshire-Inamori Leadership Academy. (Washington, DC: CSP, 2002).

4) *The Grace and Power of Civility: Lessons from the American Experience for the Coming Four Years*. (Washington, DC: CSP, 2004).

5) *The Character of George Marshall*. Published in conjunction with CSP, Washington and Lee University, the Virginia Military Institute, and the CSIS Abshire-Inamori Leadership Academy. (Washington, DC: CSP, 2005).

6) *Facing the Crisis of Character in America*. Published in conjunction with Georgetown University, CSP and CSIS Abshire-Inamori Leadership Academy. (Washington, DC: CSP, 2006).

THOMAS M. KIRLIN, ed. *Marshalling Science, Bridging the Gap: How to Win the War against Terrorism and Build A Better Peace*. With contributions from Senator William Frist, Dr. John H. Marburger III, Dr. Joshua Lederberg, Dr. William Schneider, Jr., and Dr. Homer A. Neal. (Washington, DC: CSP, 2002).

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