

AT THE CROSSROADS: America 2012: What Would George Washington Do?

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So much water has passed under the bridge of history since George Washington helped to cut a young nation out of the fraying fabric of the British Empire back in 1776.

Although his image is emblazoned on the money we touch every day, most American's know very little about the country's First President. The image of our Founding Fathers is so often portrayed as old and grey, but in reality, it was youth and daring that characterized a group of ideological men who helped move America from a subservient colony to a free republic. George Washington himself was only in his early 40's, and was relatively under-qualified in terms of military experience when he took the helm of the Continental Army.

He was neither a polished writer or an exceptional speaker, nor was he the intellectual giant that we saw in founders like Franklin, Adams, Madison, or Jefferson. He wasn't chosen for his political or military resume, his political cunning, or his ability to be manipulated by the establishment. He was chosen because of his character and his ability to lead, as a man who men would follow into battle against a much larger, more experienced and better equipped military force.

Throughout the War for Independence, he expected both his officers and soldiers to act morally, "displaying the character of republicans", and as "Christian Soldiers", defending their country's "dearest Rights and Liberties."

So under hellish winter conditions, only a few thousand men remained with General Washington on the banks of the Delaware River - where they scrapped and brawled against the odds in an unspectacular, rather ugly, albeit slim victory which saw his Continental Army take the British at Trenton. It was a battle that turned out to be the turning point in the American War for Independence.

It was a great military victory, but when it was all said and done, General Washington's true crowning achievement was his simultaneous resignation in 1783 as the commander in chief of the American army and his retirement from the world of politics. Here, America saw its conquering general hand his command of the Continental Armed Forces back to the Congress of the Confederation - a release of power never seen before in history. Rather than consolidate his power base and horde the political spoils of war, he remained true to the principles and vision shared by the Founding Fathers. This was a testament to his character, and it is an act which many successive generations can share thanks for (see short film below).

Contrast this to our current Chief Executive, Barack Obama – the latest in a growing line of Federal CEOs like Clinton and Bushes I and II, all of whose administrations seem to be ever more bent on putting political expediency and power grabbing ahead of the Founding Fathers’ integral principles of governing by consent. And then there’s that question of character.

Unfortunately, neither of these latest USA CEOs could carry a warm, damp gym towel for the Founding Fathers. Continuity of Government plans, NAFTA, GAT, Patriot Acts I and II are only a few in what has grown into an endless list of executive and congressional crimes designed to hand over American sovereignty to foreign institutions, and dismantle the check and balances which once helped to bind the fabric of a nation.

In 2012, Obama’s recent signing of the [NDAA](#) embodies everything that is wrong with the trajectory which America currently finds herself on today. Here we have a President who had the power and the opportunity to advance American prosperity by helping to repeal a litany of unconstitutional legislation, and move his country away from the threat of multi-theater military conflict – but has chosen instead to do the opposite – placing the United States in the line of deadly fire.

If George Washington found himself in the position of the current US President (who, incredibly, is alleged to have taught Constitutional Law), one can only wonder what he would do. One thing is certain – he would be moving towards the spirit *and the letter* of the US Constitution, and not away from it.

Quite simply, Washington’s qualification as President was embodied in his fundamental philosophy on ruling, “Government is not reason; it is not eloquent; it is force. Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master.” As it stands, it is all but impossible to see the 44th President of the United States adhering to any such fundamentals.

All indicators point to America as a nation at the crossroads. The current two-party cabal in power in D.C. may be blinded by the power and trappings of privilege, but our leaders would do well to emulate the unique character demonstrated by the nation’s first commander-in-chief all those years ago.

Above all though, Americans should not underestimate all that is at stake in 2012.

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