

EXCERPTS FROM
Real Change

From a World That Fails to a World That Works

By Newt Gingrich

Real Change WON'T come from Washington

Americans believe overwhelmingly that we need a change of course. Americans are surprisingly united in this belief, and in this conviction that real change will never come from Washington....The media tell us America is a nation divided between conservative red states and liberal blue states....

But that's simply not true....The real division is between red-white-and-blue America (about 85 percent of the country) and a fringe on the left (about 15 percent of the country). Not only have the media perpetuated the myth that the country is equally divided....the two major political parties foster deep divide and rancorous debate. And neither has truly engaged in trying to find creative solutions to the serious problems we face as a nation. (pp. 3-6)

Republicans Have Failed

After leaving the speakership, I realized...why the Republican Party had failed to gain not just a majority in Congress but a majority capable enough to govern effectively for a generation or more. ...Six decades of a minority mindset created a Republican Party in which an amazing number of candidates and elected leaders turned to their political consultants and pollsters for advice...this evolution into a consultant-defined party has been a huge mistake. Long-term leadership...has to involve governing rather than merely campaigning.

Real leadership inherently requires leaders who listen to their advisors but then obey their own instincts, who take risks when the situation requires it....governing is much harder than campaigning and leading is much harder than consulting. (pp. 14-19)

Democrats Haven't Even Tried

When Democratic politicians run for office, they invariably promise new government programs—programs that cost the taxpayers, inflate the bureaucracy, and put more power in the hands of a government that too often doesn't share the people's values. Before the public lets the Left explain its newest idea...they should force Democratic politicians to explain why new government programs won't be riddled with the same kinds of waste and fraud that currently plague government programs. Consider the following examples:

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has paid more than a billion dollars to deceased farmers over the last seven years.
- According to a report by the GAO our country has 55,322 criminal illegal aliens who have been arrested at least a total of 459,614 times, averaging about eight arrests per illegal alien.

...Bureaucracy, waste, union work rules, public employee union special pay, pensions and benefits all rigging the game against the average American makes it extremely difficult for the Left to offer the real change that America needs. (pp. 28-37)

The Human Effects of Dysfunction

The results of having two unreformed and dysfunctional political parties can be seen in an increasingly out-of-date government failing at its core missions of effective governance.... We have seen this cost of bad government most recently in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina....Hurricanes can't be prevented, but the catastrophe in New Orleans that this hurricane caused was completely avoidable....

If government is the world that fails, the branches of government that should have responded to Hurricane Katrina failed catastrophically....The local levee board was incompetent....The New Orleans city government is notoriously corrupt....The Democratic governor of Louisiana was too...worried more about shifting blame to President Bush than about saving New Orleans. The Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness was under federal indictment for losing more than \$50 million in federal funds....FEMA was incapable of operating effectively. Its bureaucratic attitude and arrogance became a stunning indictment of the federal government....

According to the Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for the Response to Hurricane Katrina, the federal response to Katrina was a "national failure." The report found a dramatic contrast between the government bureaucracy that failed, and which caused "death, injury, and suffering," and the world that works, consisting of individuals "whose exceptional initiative saved time, money, and lives." (pp. 43-46)

Real Solutions for Real Change

If the winning presidential candidate in 2008, whether Republican or Democrat, accepts the principles of these structures or looks for solutions to America's great challenges within them, there will be little hope of a successful presidency....

To change government for the better, all we really need to do is one simple, yet extraordinary, thing: force our government to act on facts and evidence and adopt commonsense practical solutions. It sounds obvious, yet that's exactly what government doesn't do now....

Leadership all begins with values and vision. The solutions we want will have our values as their base, our vision for the future as our goal, and evidence (metrics) as our standard for measuring our progress....focusing on the underlying, fundamental problems is precisely what those of us who want real change have to learn to do. It is also what the American people want....by 92 percent to 5 percent, they preferred long-term to short-term solutions. It is the politicians who lack patience, not the American people.

Moving from the world that fails to the world that works requires different modes of thinking. It requires moving from bureaucrats to entrepreneurs, from recipients to customers, and from no choice to real choice. It also requires bold new organizational models for an entrepreneurial, twenty-first-century government that actually gets things done. (pp. 69-93)

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