

The Lorne W. Craner Memorial Lecture

International Republican Institute

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On June 20, 1782, the U.S. Congress approved the design of the Great Seal for the new United States.

Americans had taken as long to agree on the seal as they had to win their independence; the Congress had appointed the committee to prepare the seal almost six years earlier – on the Fourth of July, 1776.

Now, in 1782, Charles Thomson, the secretary to the Congress, explained the symbolism of the proposed design. He pointed to the thirteen-tiered – yet unfinished – pyramid of states, overseen by the eye of Providence. The Virgilian motto underneath – *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, New Order of the Ages – suggested that the Founding Fathers had some big ideas in mind.

Thomson observed that the date underneath the seal, 1776, marked the Declaration of Independence, and the words of the motto, according to Thomson, “signify the beginning of the new American Era, which commences from that date.”

As James Field, my first professor of diplomatic history pointed out, Thomson’s explanation does not clarify “whether the adjective ‘American’ is to be construed as geographically limiting – or as broadly descriptive.” Professor Field added that, “Much of American history is implicit in this question....”

Is the “American” era just for those of us at home – or will it range far and wide?

For those of you who do not recall the Great Seal of the United States, but who still carry cash, you’ll find that the U.S. Treasury conveniently arranged to reproduce the seal on the back of the dollar bill.



I have opened with this story because Lorne Craner, our friend, loved U.S. history and the adventure of America. I will return to ideas and history a little later because I think Lorne would have enjoyed discussing America’s purpose in the world today.

I wish first to recollect Lorne Craner the man.

His favorite drink was tomato juice with added salt.

When Lorne travelled, which was often, he hauled along a gym bag filled with books.

He loved cars – and recall, this was during an era when people still used to drive their own cars!

Lorne could walk into any room in any country in any part of the world and convey to the person he met that he or she was the only one who mattered.

Lorne was a natural.

As Winston Churchill said about a close friend who passed away far too young, Lorne “seemed to have a double dose of human nature.”

The True North of Lorne’s life was the love of his family.

He adored Anne, his partner. Having lost his own father to war at an early age, Lorne reveled in being a good Dad, and he wanted Isabelle, Alexander, and Charlie to be his life’s work, as well as part of his work life. Lorne brought the family to IRI events – ranging from the social to those at the heart of IRI’s mission.

Some 15 years ago, when IRI launched the Women’s Democracy Network, Lorne made sure Isabelle was there to see the opening day.

Lorne felt deeply that for generations – forever, really – women had been excluded or marginalized from political life. He knew that no democracy could prosper with only half its citizens. And he wanted Isabelle and her brothers to know that they could be part of a new era.

Lorne being Lorne, he had an extended family. He came from a line of heroes, and Lorne added to their honor through his inspiring, gallant service. He carried the stars and stripes forward in his distinctive way.

Lorne’s dad, Bob Craner, an Air Force pilot, was shot down on his 102nd mission, two over the maximum for Air Force pilots. Major Craner stood steadfast as a POW in the Hanoi Hilton. The Naval aviator in solitary confinement the next cell was named John McCain. For two years, they rarely saw one another, but communicated continually through about 18 inches of brick.

McCain later wrote that Bob Craner kept him alive by tapping encouragement in code through the wall. Senator McCain became a godfather of sorts to Lorne.

John McCain and Lorne Craner shared a rare gift.

I recall after meetings with Senator McCain on some trying topic, facing long odds, that McCain would cut through the gloom by mumbling, "I've had worse days." And then we'd all perk up and recognize that we should keep plugging away – looking toward a brighter day.

With Lorne, we would hear, just at the right moment, that amazing, astonishing, and astounding laugh. The tense or frustrating moment would fade away, unable to resist Lorne's signal of unbounded friendship and belief in what could be done.

I first met Lorne in early 1989 when he joined Secretary of State James Baker's team as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs. Lorne had gained valuable Congressional experience with two Arizonan internationalists, Jim Kolbe and John McCain.

Lorne paired well with his lifetime friend, the indefatigable and irreverent Peter Madigan, who came to State with us from the Treasury. Peter and Lorne complemented their boss wonderfully -- the, shall we say, indomitable and incomparable Janet Mullins. Secretary Baker gave them a lot to do with Congress, especially treaties for the Senate.

I had the good fortune to work again with Lorne when President George W. Bush and Secretary Colin Powell appointed him Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Labor, and Human Rights. I was working as U.S. Trade Representative. Lorne shared the idea, along with our mutual friend, the late Matt Niemeyer, that free trade and the rule of the law could encourage and support open societies and the development of the institutions upon which strong republics must be based.

Of course, Lorne's government service led him to his greatest task and contribution: the building of the International Republican Institute as a cornerstone of the worldwide effort to promote representative government, democratic cultures, better and more transparent governance, freedoms, and human rights.

President Ronald Reagan planted the seed of the idea for the National Endowment for Democracy—including IRI and the National Democratic Institute – in his speech at Westminster in London on June 8, 1982.

The moment was not auspicious. The early summer of 1982 seemed like a low point in the Cold War. The United States was still in a deep recession, and the world economy had grown very little over five years. The Western Allies debated fractiously, communism had cracked down in Poland, and large demonstrations marched for a nuclear freeze.

Reagan's speech, much of which he wrote and all of which he edited closely, shone a light on a different pathway: one of democracy and peace. He offered a vision – yet also a willingness to negotiate.

Reagan recognized that the “not-at-all-fragile flower” of democracy still needed “cultivating.” He added practical steps to his principled summons so as “to foster the infrastructure of democracy” – a free press, unions, political parties, and universities.

President Reagan turned out to be most successful when he enlisted partners who helped turn words into actions.

Secretary of State George Shultz played such a role for Reagan’s foreign policy.

Secretary Baker assisted with Reagan’s economic policies, at home and internationally.

And Lorne Craner brought the speech at Westminster to life through the International Republican Institute.

Lorne understood that democracies have to work every day of the year – not just on election days. Republics need constitutions and institutions, parties and communities – along with majorities and minorities that can debate, reconcile, and transfer authority peacefully. Citizens and their representatives need to advocate, negotiate -- and even compromise.

Lorne had the capacity to sense a political opening in countries. Once he perceived an opportunity, Lorne would start a training program or exchange, expand relationships, and foster networks that would build resilience.

Lorne was proud of America's democratic story – its perpetual striving to do better. And he combined America's nationalism with its internationalism. He reached out to democratic partners around the world. Lorne built a trans-Atlantic partnership with Wilfried Martens, then the leader of the European Peoples' Party. Lorne understood that the idea of America was understood best when people from other countries embraced the appeal in their own languages, through their independent experiences.

Wherever Lorne went – to Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East – he looked for partners and fostered the local roots of their democracies, whether growing, recent, or even just potential. As John Quincy Adams, an American Realist, explained almost two centuries ago, freedom must be grounded in a mutual commitment among equals; it cannot be gifted or grounded by an outside power.

Lorne encouraged, but he also knew when to lead from the front. When Egypt's government raided and closed IRI's offices just days before an election, Lorne flew to Cairo with \$10,000 in cash to carry forward the election observer mission on his own shoulders.

Lorne also recognized that IRI's work built a two-way street, especially for Members of Congress. IRI's missions enabled elected Americans to meet their counterparts abroad, to better understand the on-the-ground challenges of political and economic development, and to recognize commonalities but also perceive differences.

Travel – and common causes – may help Americans of different parties to get to know one another as people, and even as colleagues. Perhaps IRI and NDI can import some helpful democratic cultures and customs to help with the work at home....

Lorne would be the first to say that his efforts were just part of the legacies of an incredible group – from the IRI board and leadership, through the intrepid staff, and on to every recruited partner and intern. So they are. We will see the finest memorial for Lorne and the founding generation of IRI through the work of President Daniel Twining, today’s board, and the inheritors of the tradition.

Churchill offered a description that matches Lorne Craner: “He banked this treasure in the hearts of friends, and they will cherish his memory till their time is come.”

I opened with some history because I thought Lorne would have enjoyed the story.

I’ll close with some ideas for the future, drawing from history, because I think Lorne would relish stirring debate about the future Republican foreign policy.

We’ve been living through divisive times, as Americans and Republicans.

In the words of that wise philosopher, Charlie Brown, “I’m still hoping yesterday will get better.”

Today, I’ll offer six principles to guide a future Republican foreign policy.

First, a Republican foreign policy will respect power – being neither ashamed to pursue America’s national interests, nor too quick to use the country’s might.

By matching America's power to its interests, U.S. foreign policy can achieve its objectives and build credibility, both at home and abroad.

Alexander Hamilton, in the Republic's earliest days, recognized that America's economic strength built the sinews of America's power. As for diplomacy, Hamilton cautioned, "Strut is good for nothing." "Real firmness" "combine[s] energy with moderation."

Abraham Lincoln understood that the U.S. Union, if preserved, could create a new type of power, including of attractive example.

Theodore Roosevelt, at the turn of the 20th Century, used America's influence to mediate among great powers in Asia and Europe, seeking to maintain balances of power. TR recognized that "Diplomacy rests on the substantial basis of potential force," but he also advised, "Walk softly and carry a big stick."

Decades later, Dwight Eisenhower had to marshal American power carefully, building and sustaining strength and internal dynamism for the long, twilight struggle with the Soviets.

Second, a conservative and Republican foreign policy prudently adds to America's influence by building and sustaining alliances and coalitions.

Effective coalition leadership requires disciplined assessments of priorities, listening, an appreciation of others' interests, continual consultations, and the skill of focusing on core objectives while being willing to compromise on other points.

The genius of America's alliance leadership has been to mobilize support for key U.S. aims while enabling partners to advance their interests.

Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan – the great Congressional architect of the Marshall Plan, NATO, and the U.S. role in the UN – helped guide the Truman Administration toward this new model by combining alliances with U.S. national interests.

Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger rebalanced alliance burden-sharing after the painful experience in Vietnam. Nixon's new doctrine preserved American leadership – and the power of U.S. initiative – under changed circumstances.

The grand masters of alliance leadership – George H.W. Bush and James Baker – brought the Cold War to a peaceful end in Europe, organized a landmark coalition to reverse Saddam Hussein's aggression, and laid the foundations for economic partnerships in North America, the Asia-Pacific, and globally. Their prudent yet highly competitive diplomacy fortified U.S. power and advanced American principles. They emphasized deeds over talk.

Third, Republicans should judge international agreements and institutions as means to achieve ends, not as forms of political therapy. Agreements and institutions can help recognize common interests, mobilize resources, facilitate bargaining, encourage the development of shared rules, manage differences, and resolve disputes cooperatively.

IRI has extended democratic ideals and practices by working with and building institutions.

Yet conservatives recognize that international law, unlike domestic law, only codifies agreed-upon cooperation. Even among democracies, international law not backed by enforcement needs negotiations to work, and international law not backed by power cannot cope with dangerous states and people.

In the early 20th Century, Republican Secretaries of State and War, Charles Evans Hughes and Elihu Root, pushed for such a practical American internationalism. They drew upon America's experience to expand international options for achieving U.S. aims. In later generations, Henry Kissinger and James Baker shrewdly negotiated international agreements and organized coalitions through international bodies.

They were realists – yet with a creative sense of the good that only America could achieve and the international order that the United States could design and construct.

Fourth, a modern Republican foreign policy must embrace revolutionary changes in information, communications, technology, commerce, science, finance, and the environment.

These transformations will shape global politics, economics, and security.

Communities of private groups, whether organized for business or social causes, will achieve results far beyond the reach of governments and international bureaucracies.

The United States should leverage this dynamism to open minds, markets, and societies.

America should ally with agents of change around the world through new networks of free trade, information, and investment.

It is a fool's game – and a loser's strategy – to compete with authoritarians by restricting America's openness – whether to people, goods, capital, inventions, or ideas. Fortress America retreats to defense – instead of going on offense to reshape the competition.

Even in the aftermath of our terrifying Civil War, Secretary of State William Seward believed that America's economy – and its ideas – could be a magnet – an attractive power, that contrasted with the dominating dictates of empires. Seward thought that the Union – once preserved – could offer ideas for new types of cooperative relations and even integration among states. And Seward was of course willing to pay \$7.2 million to Russia so that Dan Sullivan could become a Senator from Alaska and IRI's Chair.

Ronald Reagan and George Schultz shared an optimism about America's engine of free enterprise, especially in a new information age. They recognized that the Soviet Union's planned economy could never keep up with capitalism's technological innovation.

Reagan also knew that America's prosperity grew with the world's.

In 1979, when launching his presidential campaign, Reagan foresaw that "the key to our own future security may lie in both Mexico and Canada becoming much stronger countries than they are today.... It is time that we stopped thinking of our nearest neighbors as foreigners."

That sounds a little different from recent campaign rhetoric.

Lorne carried the banner of Reagan's beliefs. When President George W. Bush, Jim Kolbe, and other innovators created the Millennium Challenge Corporation to link development assistance to better governance, open trade, and economic reforms, Lorne again stepped up to help put plans into practice. Lorne was a doer.

Fifth, Republicans know, from experience, that there are people in the world who hate America and the ideas it upholds.

The United States must remain vigilant and have the strength to defeat its enemies. People driven by enmity or by a need to dominate will not respond to reason or goodwill. They will manipulate civilized rules for uncivilized ends.

Abraham Lincoln, our most empathetic president, recognized that the evil of slavery had to be extirpated to preserve the “last, best hope” of the American democratic experiment.

Finally, all Republican policies – foreign and domestic – must be founded upon respect for the Constitution.

The Constitution, taken together with the Declaration of Independence, suggests that the national purpose is to safeguard the American people, form a more perfect union, protect Constitutional rights, and enable Americans to pursue the fruits of their liberties – while furthering a wider order that respects free individuals, just governments, and the common dignity of humankind.

The Founding Fathers were both visionary and cautionary: suggesting that governmental power should be exercised with restraint, while individual initiative should be encouraged, at home and abroad.

With a “decent respect to the opinions of mankind,” the Founders would urge their inheritors to explain America’s views while never shrinking from pursuing the country’s reasoned beliefs.

The most cherished belief is an exceptional one – that America’s greatest power is to be found in the dynamism of its citizens, and that the intrepid spirit of Americans will shape future eras at home and around the world.

The Constitution is not just a revered ancient text or maxims to be cited opportunistically.

Every one of you who have served in government, elected or selected, took an oath to preserve and protect the Constitution.

These are responsibilities, duties, rights...and limits... we inherited from patriots who came before us – and, I hope, will hand over to future generations of Americans.



“Man is spirit,” Churchill told his colleagues shortly before resigning the last time. As Andrew Roberts explains at the close of his Churchill biography, the departing statesman viewed spirit as the dash, intelligence, hard work, persistence, physical and moral courage, and above all iron willpower of a lifetime.

Lorne Craner is a spirit for all of us, and for always.