

America's New Chapter

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leadership on Inaugural Day, another celebration is fast upon us.

On February 12, we mark the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, without whom I believe next month's historic mo-

tory.

Lincoln called upon that courage and wisdom to make one of the most difficult decisions a United States president has ever faced. He abolished slavery.

to heal the wounds of a damaged society and raise the nation from its knees.

Barack Obama has indicated his admiration of Abraham Lincoln since the inception of his cam-

ing America's economy, ending two wars in an honorable fashion and healing a divided and troubled nation.

This is no mere task for a young man whose rhetoric soars high but

ing he was more style than substance.

But like Lincoln, FDR and Teddy Roosevelt, he understands the power of the "bully pulpit" and the importance of speaking directly to the people.

America has gone through a painful metamorphosis this past election year.

On January 20, a young African American will take the oath of office as the 44th President of the United States while placing his hand upon the same bible used by Abraham Lincoln in 1861.



Obama will need those skills to convince the American people to join him in this century's epic struggle - putting the nation back on course and preparing for a new chapter of greatness in the years to come.

As the 44th President places his hand on the 16th President's Bible

After that day, a civil war ensued that saw more Americans killed and wounded than any conflict the country has encountered since.

As we celebrate one of the hallmarks of our democracy, the peaceful and orderly passage of

ment would not be taking place.

As Walt Whitman, one of our most admired poets, expressed in his poem Oh Captain! My Captain!, Lincoln demonstrated serene wisdom and courage during a critical time in America's his-

This decision tore apart the new nation, pitting brother against brother.

However, after the victory of the Union Army over the Confederacy, Lincoln chose forgiveness and reconciliation over retribution.

His ultimate desire was

paign.

He announced his candidacy in Springfield, Illinois, close to the spot where Lincoln is buried, and created a "team of rivals" as his Cabinet, as did Lincoln.

Obama faces a truly great challenge - restor-

whose experience is limited.

Looking to Lincoln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt as models of inspiration and leadership is certainly a good start.

During the campaign, Obama's rivals mocked his oratorical skills, say-

to take the solemn oath, not only will all Americans be holding their breath, I believe that after President Barack Hussein Obama declares "So help me God", the world will let out a universal sigh of relief and encouragement.

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