



# The Great Game of Politics: Why We Elect, Whom We Elect

Dick Stoken

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From our nation's inception there has been a constant dynamic of tension between those political philosophies that we have labeled the left and the right, despite the fact that the vast majority of American voters really fall into the category of moderates. During the early years, the shifts between the two were dramatic and frequent: the Federalists on one side, the Jeffersonians on the other, as the young democracy came to grips with the two opposing political forces that were to mold the new nation. On one hand we have the concerned with business, conservatism, and the development of capital and wealth. They want the government to provide security that will protect the nation's interest while allowing free-market forces to increase prosperity. On the other hand we have the left, concerned with personal rights, equality, and the fostering of prosperity for all citizens through an active and involved federal government.

By explicating the Presidency from George Washington to George W. Bush,

The Great Game of Politics examines the American Presidency as a cyclic reflection of the concerns of the electorate vis à vis the excitation of the ideologies of our two major parties in a constant left-right swing where the will of the people sets the pendulum in motion and determines the direction the country will take for another four years. From the early years, where the dynamic tension that forged the nation initially required numerous shifts to establish an acceptable political equilibrium, to the revered legacies of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan, whose presidencies not only initiated major political shifts but also instituted fundamental changes in the apparatus of government that would prove to be integral to the administrations that followed them, both Democratic and Republican.

They seized the reins of government and made a lasting mark. Indeed the truly great presidents<sup>3</sup>/4Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Lincoln, Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Reagan¾shaped the course of history for our nation and in doing so proved themselves to be masters of The Great Game of Politics.



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