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## [Bloomberg, New York, and the Nation](#)

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This nation has D.C. fatigue. Americans feel that political culture of Washington DC is intrinsically toxic. It appears that no matter whom we send to the nation's capital, they eventually absorb the values of this one-industry city dominated by bureaucrats, lobbyists, political operatives, and leak-dependent journalists. Serving in Congress is no longer considered to be serious preparation for the White House. The Kennedy-Johnson ticket in 1960 was the last time we elected two U.S Senators to serve as president and vice president; since then, four governors and three vice presidents have been elected president. But, no senators and members of the House.

There are three reasons Mike Bloomberg has succeeded in New York and why his nonpolitical style has transcended conventional party politics. First, Mike Bloomberg is more than a business man; he is an "inventor," the first real inventor since Ben Franklin to apply his skills to government. Bloomberg actually created a new product that revolutionized access to financial information. He started a company that he built, not by buying other firms but by expanding the market for his invention, the "Bloomberg" box. Unlike so many of the wealthy in politics, Mike Bloomberg made his money; he did not inherit it like the Rockefeller and Kennedy clan, did not marry it like John Kerry, or get it through corporate restructuring like Mitt Romney. He has brought a technologically-oriented approach to modernizing the government of New York City. Bloomberg is the first mayor who considers a "platform" to be part of a computer system, not a political ideology.

Second, starting on September 11 2001, Americans have rediscovered New York City and learned that it is not a foreign country. Bloomberg has overseen the economic recovery and reinvention of New York. Six years ago, the evening newscasts all opened with images of the fires burning at Ground Zero. Now, every morning, when Americans wake up and turn on their televisions, what do they see: *The Today Show* broadcasting live outdoor concerts from Rockefeller Center; *Good Morning America* does cooking demonstrations in Times Square, and the *CBS Early Show* with a background full of

joggers running through Central Park. We've come a long way from the summer of 1977 when Howard Cossell shouted to the nation during a power outage that led to rioting, "The Bronx is Burning."

More than a fourth of the population of the United States has visited New York since September 11, and almost every American feels they know New York, admittedly as seen through the eyes of *Seinfeld*, *Regis and Kelly*, or round the clock reruns of *Law and Order*. After September 11, many people wondered why anyone would want to work, live or visit a city that had been successfully attacked twice by terrorists, in 1993 and 2001.

Bloomberg has not tried to impose himself and his persona on the city: that's been the secret to his success. He has used the powers of the mayoralty to create the conditions for New York to flourish and, in doing so; America has renewed its bonds with New York. Today, the city is safer than any other large city in the nation, more people live in the city than ever before, and the city's economy is growing at a faster rate than the nation. Unlike Las Vegas or Disneyworld, tourism in New York is not fueled by escape. Here, every aspect of the city is part of the entertainment: sidewalks with more skin than a fashion show runway and 25,000 restaurants and street vendors that make food, rather than just serve it straight from a microwave.

Apart from Bloomberg's success in business and in guiding New York's recovery, Bloomberg's leadership style has transformed the politics of New York, and may be just what the nation needs. He does not rely on confrontation, threat, or ridicule to get things done. In a political minefield like New York, Bloomberg has demonstrated that you can get things done without making lifelong enemies, intimidating opponents or giving away the municipal treasury. When Bloomberg loses a battle, as he did in the fight for a stadium on Manhattan's West Side, he simply moves on. As a result, the Mets and Yankees are now paying for and building new baseball stadiums. And, the very groups that opposed the West Side stadium are now his allies in his new environmental sustainability plan.

Bloomberg has changed the political climate of New York; and that's what the nation wants in Washington, DC. His success in New York is not based on a single issue, but a leadership style based on taking risks to get things done, whether its school reform, public health, or rezoning the waterfront. After eight years of Clinton and eight years of Bush, it's no wonder that Americans have an appetite for someone untarnished by the culture of DC.