14th Annual Lincoln Legacy Lectures  
Lincoln and Reconstruction: America’s Struggle for Equality  

Presented by the Center for State Policy and Leadership  
University of Illinois Springfield  
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“Lincoln’s Changing Thoughts on Reconstruction”  
Opening Remarks by Dr. Michael Burlingame,  
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Synopsis  
Lincoln’s 1863 Reconstruction proposal -- known as his 10% plan -- was once regarded as the model he would have followed if he had not been assassinated. When his successor, Andrew Johnson, pursued policies similar to those implicit in Lincoln's 10% plan, he encountered fierce resistance from Congress, which impeached him. It was long thought that Lincoln would have suffered a similar fate had he lived. But in fact, Lincoln's views in 1863 were different from those he held in 1865. His earlier proposal, which was announced while the war was still on, was designed to encourage the Confederates to surrender. Therefore he offered them terms which seemed to Radical Republicans far too lenient. But by April 1865, with the war virtually over, it was no longer necessary to inveigle the South into surrendering. Therefore Lincoln publicly proposed a new approach to Reconstruction, including black voting rights, and thus moved much closer to the Radical Republicans' position. Had he lived, Reconstruction would have been far different from what it became during the presidency of the inept Andrew Johnson.