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## The Coming Post-Obama Renaissance

Posted By [Victor Davis Hanson](#) On October 2, 2011 @ 3:59 pm In [Uncategorized](#) | [221 Comments](#)

### The Parting of the Clouds

In every literary, historical or cinematic masterpiece, times must grow darkest before the sunrise and deliverance. Tolkien worked that classical theme to great effect. A sense of fatalism overtook a seemingly doomed Gondor — right before the overthrow of Barad-dûr and the dawn of a new age of men. The historian Herodotus, in literary fashion, also brilliantly juxtaposed the Greek collapse at Thermopylae (the Spartan King Leonidas' head impaled on a stake), and the Persian firing of an abandoned Athens, with Themistocles's sudden salvation of Western civilization at Salamis. In the classic Western film, hopelessness pervades until out of nowhere a Shane rides in.

### What Was Hope and Change?

We are living in an age of such morality tales, though the depressing cycle reminds us that the gloom is hardly fiction or artistry. For those with a little capital there is only a sinking stock market. It seems to wipe out more of their 401(k)s each week, as if each month cancels out yet another year of prior thrift. Near zero interest means any money on deposit is only insurance, not any more a source of income. Millions are trapped in their unsold houses, either underwater or facing an end to any dreams of tapping equity by sale.

And for the greater number without savings? Stagnant GDP, 9.1 unemployment, another \$5 trillion in debt, \$1.6 trillion annual deficits, and sky-high fuel and food prices have combined to crush any notion of upward mobility. (If in 2004 5.7% unemployment was supposed to mark a "jobless recovery," what exactly is 9.1% called? If Bush's average \$500 billion deficits over eight years were abhorrent, what must we say of Obama's average \$1.6 trillion over three? Really bad?)

In response, the Obama administration — let me be candid here — seems clueless, overpopulated as it is by policy nerds, academic overachievers, and tenured functionaries (cf. Larry Summers' "there is no adult in charge"). They tend to flash Ivy League certificates, but otherwise have little record of achievement in the private sector. Officials seem to think that long ago test scores, a now Neolithic nod from an Ivy League professor, or a past prize translates into knowing what makes America run in places like Idaho and southern Michigan.

Yes, I know that Steven Chu is "brilliant" and a Nobel laureate. But that means no more than suggesting that laureate Paul Krugman was right about adding even more trillions to the debt. My neighbors know enough not to quip, as the know-it-all Chu did, that California farms (the most productive in the U.S.) will dry up and blow away, or gas prices should reach European levels, or Americans can't be trusted to buy the right light bulbs, or a failed Solyndra just needed millions more of taxpayers' money.

Solyndra and Van Jones are the metaphors of these times, reminding us of the corruption of the very notion of "green." In the age of Al Gore, it has eroded from a once noble ideal of conservation to a tawdry profit- and job-scam for assorted hucksters and snake-oil salesmen. Without the lofty hype and shake-down, most otherwise would have had to find productive jobs. Tragically, "green" is the new refuge of scoundrels.

### Costal del Sol Community Organizing?

I fear we have not seen such a divisive president since Richard Nixon. Suddenly there is a new fiscal Rubicon. Those crossing \$200,000 in annual income now are to be suspect ("fat cat," "corporate jet owner," "millionaires and billionaires" [note how the two are sloppily associated — as if 1/1000 the wealth of one is still approximate to the other ]); those still on

the other bank, are far more inherently noble (cf. Michelle Obama's selfless legions, who, like the first couple, supposedly were to take her advice to turn down guaranteed riches in the abhorrent, but easy, corporate sector, to take on a life of noble service and relative poverty as hard-working community organizers and reps).

When did immigration law become embedded within the racial industry? If millions of Koreans were entering the U.S. illegally, would the National Council of La Raza insist on their amnesty, or be indifferent, or worry that such an influx might tax existing social services that provide for U.S. citizen poor? Did we ever have a president who issued a video (cf. 2010) appealing to constituents by their race, or suggested that border enforcement was equivalent to "moats" and "alligators," or beseeched his Latino allies "to punish our enemies"? Is the president trying to turn enforcement of a federal statute into community organizing?

The Black Caucus [has sadly become a caricature of itself](#) <sup>[1]</sup>, bewildered that Great Society II has further decimated the black community — now in racial solidarity with a failing president, now lashing out at the Tea Party. Yet the latter's advocacy of fiscal discipline, greater deregulation, oil exploration, smaller government, and entitlement reform would unleash the private sector — and, to use the administration lingo, really create for the inner cities "millions of new jobs."

So we are all confused by this new Morgan Freeman-esque (one of my favorite actors) [racial illogicality](#) <sup>[2]</sup>: electing Obama was proof of racial harmony; but criticizing him proof of racialism; wanting to end his policies (that have impoverished black America most of all) borders on racism; expanding what will further harm blacks is proof of racial harmony? So one was supposed to vote for Obama to prove himself not racist, and then to stay quiet to ensure that he was still not racist? \*

Readers will add here [the end of an investigative media](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, ObamaCare, the new Solyndra and Fast and Furious scandals, "lead from behind" foreign policy, spread-the-wealth demonization of business, crony capitalism, punitive measures against everyone from guitar makers to plane manufacturers, distrust of oil and gas producers, Eric Holder's politicized Justice Department, and so on.

### **OK—So Why the Optimism?**

Why, then, do I see blue sky and a break in the present storms? For a variety of very good reasons.

### **Quite Exceptional, In Fact**

The American Constitution remains singular and ensures a stable form of government of the sort absent in a Russia, China, the Islamic world, and even (or especially) the EU. Yes, I know Obama has mused that democracy is suddenly "messy" and he lamented to the La Razistas that he couldn't quite enact legislation by fiat. And, yes, the governor of North Carolina, in revolutionary fashion, just wondered why we could not suspend congressional elections for a bit, while former budget director Peter Orszag (did he not get his trillions in "stimulus" from a Democratic Congress before he fled to Citicorp?) now dreams of a way of running around democratic "gridlock." But for all that sudden liberal lamentation that the noble ends cannot be achieved by any means necessary, our system of government remains. And it will ensure us a stability abjectly absent elsewhere in the world.

### **Saudi America**

Second, even Barack Obama cannot stop the oil and gas industries. Their brilliant new technologies and entrepreneurialism may well turn us into a fuel depot like Saudi Arabia, doubling our proven oil and gas reserves. Soon someone is going to see that our own natural gas can power millions of cars, freeing our foreign policy from Gulf authoritarians. We are poised for an oil boom not seen since the age of Texas and Oklahoma wildcatting. With a friendly new administration and more exploration out West, offshore, in the Gulf and in Alaska to augment the Dakotas oil renaissance, we will soon save hundreds of billions of dollars in imported fuel costs, stop subsidizing our enemies, perhaps help to lower energy prices worldwide, create "millions of new jobs," and give a larger window of opportunity for

solar, batteries, and alternative energies to become more efficient and cost competitive in the free market.

### **Pressure Is Building**

Third, private enterprise is hoarding cash, uncertain over the costs of ObamaCare, in fear of more regulations and higher taxes, stung by "at some point you've made enough money" harassing bluster, and still convinced that equally cautious consumers are simply not buying. Yet, the country is still growing, still needs new homes, more food, and more energy. There are few strikes. Americans remain more self-reliant than our competitors. We are not a shrinking nation with the demographic crises of a Europe or Russia. Soon the mounting pressure will be released by a new change in government and we will see a recovery that should have occurred more than two years ago when the recession officially "ended" in June 2009 — only all the more enhanced due to its delay. When Obama leaves office, there will be a sense of psychological release in the business community that will lead to a far greater "stimulus" than printing more money.

### **Tempered by Fire**

Fourth, that psychology of catharsis that accompanies the end of this administration will last for sometime. The next time Keynesians [lecture us on more borrowing or greater spending](#) <sup>[4]</sup> (fill in the blanks), Americans will perhaps ask, "So we need to borrow at least \$5 trillion within three years? Keep interest rates at near zero? Vastly inflate the money supply? Extend unemployment insurance to over 100 weeks? Exceed 50 million on food stamps?"

With an inept Carter, the left's lament was "weak messenger." With the triangulating Clinton, it was "weak message." With Obama, despite the recent defections and liberal angst, there were both the messianic messenger and the true-blue message. What's left? The American people turned on both in less than two years. That change of mood will lead the way to necessary reform in a way a less harmful McCain administration could not have achieved: greater revenue from tax simplification, tax reduction, and greater tax compliance, less regulations, entitlement reform, and budgetary discipline. Obama is doing to liberal politics what no right-wing activist could dream up.

### **Lead from the Front**

Fifth, we tried UN multilateralism. We asked permission from the Arab League to intervene in Libya. We celebrated treating enemies and friends alike as neutrals. It did not quite work. Israel is still a democracy; its neighbors still are not. Europe's leaders still accuse Obama as much as they did Bush. Hussein as a middle name means nothing to the Middle East. Putin is still Putin, and China still is China. Soon we will return to a quiet sense of American exceptionalism, but this time more so, given that the naysayers have had their naysay. Proper appreciation of U.S. global power and moral international citizenship likewise will restore confidence. I don't think we will hear anymore that Bush turned off theocratic Iran, that Bush radicalized the Palestinians, that Bush destroyed relations with Turkey or Pakistan, or alienated Russia. In all these cases, things are about the same as in 2008 — or much worse.

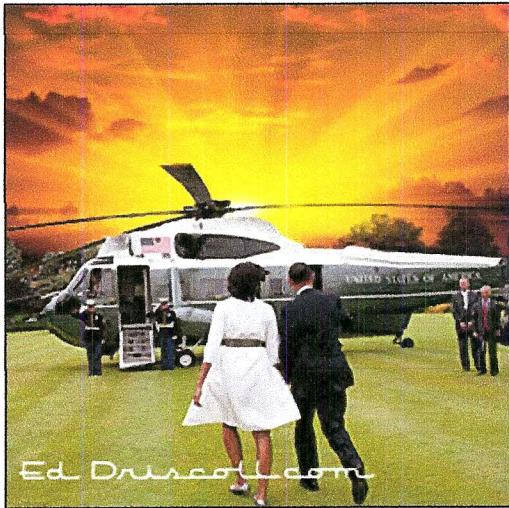
### **Unmatched**

Finally, the U.S. military has only improved in the last decade. [It secured Iraq against all odds](#) <sup>[5]</sup>. Its Predator drones, in challenge and response fashion, have outpaced the new terrorism.

The domestic critique of the Bush-Cheney anti-terrorism protocols has been rendered mere partisanship by the Obama embrace or expansion of nearly every element that was once demonized between 2002-8. Obama's unintended legacy is to legitimize Guantanamo, Iraq, renditions, tribunals, preventative detention, the Patriot Act, and so on. A Barack Obama who demagogued waterboarding won't again — unless waterboarding three self-confessed mass-murdering terrorists is a "war crime" while blowing up over 2,000 suspected terrorists (and any in their vicinity, including U.S. citizens) with judge/jury/executioner missiles is not. (I think the current administration's idea is simply that the more we vaporize in Waziristan, the less hassle we have with live suspects at Gitmo — again, on the rationale that a current

senator, posing like Obama in 2007, can always have a field day with a captive live person in U.S. custody, but not so much with a dead one on foreign soil.)

### Brighter Days



I, like many, am worried about the Republican field — as is the custom at this early stage. There is more to be endured in 2012. The Obama decline will spark venomous politics of the sort we haven't seen in years. This time hope and change will be even more "Bush did it!/"You're all racists!/"They" will take your Social Security." The financial crisis is not over. We are not yet at the beginning of the end for statism, but the Churchillian end of its new beginning.

Still, let us cheer up a bit. The country always knew, but for just a bit forgot, that you cannot print money and borrow endlessly. It always knew that bureaucrats were less efficient than employers. It knew that Guantanamo was not a gulag and Iraq was not "lost." But given the anguish over Iraq, the anger at Bush, the Obama postracial novelty and "centrist" façade, and the Freddie/Fannie/Wall Street collapse, it wanted to believe what it knew might not be true. Now three years of Obama have slapped voters out of their collective trance.

The spell has now passed; and we are stronger for its passing. There is going to be soon a sense of relief that we have not experienced in decades. In short, sadder but wiser Americans will soon be turned loose with a vigor unseen in decades.

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\*The president — with ratings diving — is now on the attack against Republican candidates, who, he alleges, were quiet (and thus dishonored a U.S. soldier) when some members of the crowd booed a gay soldier.

Yet it is unclear from the audio whether the crowd, or just one or two boopers, was jeering — as it is unknown the degree to which the candidates on the stage could hear the booper[s].\*\* If the crowd collectively booed the soldier, and if the candidates heard that, then, of course, their silence was telling. But if the boo came from an isolated heckler or two, and if the candidates either did not hear him, or realized that he was just a lone wolf without crowd support, then once again [Obama is demagoguing](#) <sup>[6]</sup>.

Yet Barack Obama should be reluctant to charge one with guilt by silence, especially in a military context. For example, by his own admission, he attended Trinity Church "every week" (*Chicago Sun-Times* [11/08/2004]: "Yep. Every week. 11 o'clock service") and so must have heard — and so kept silent about — the racist hatred of his own pastor.

And, in regards to a presidential candidate's tolerance for slights against military personnel, more hypocrisy still: when lecturing Gen. Petraeus in September 2008 during the Senate hearings, Sen. Obama took no opportunity to criticize the MoveOn.org ad that had just appeared ("General Betray Us") or [to disassociate himself](#) <sup>[7]</sup> from fellow senator and rival

presidential candidate Sen. Hillary Clinton's charge that Petraeus was essentially a liar ("the reports that you provide to us really require a willing suspension of disbelief").

Obama's latest charge is perhaps a preview of the campaign to come: he apparently won't be running on food prices, the housing market, gas prices, unemployment numbers, GDP, the present stock market, the numbers on food stamps and unemployment insurance, the deficit, aggregate new debt, government borrowing, or consumer or business confidence.

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\*\* Barack Obama: "We don't believe in standing silent when that happens. We don't believe in them being silent since. You want to be Commander-in-Chief? You can start by standing up for the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States, even when it's not politically convenient."

I have read this a dozen times and have no idea what it means. Is the transcript wrongly transmitted? E.g., He meant to say something like, "We don't [agree with] [those] being silent, since [it begs the question], 'You want to be Commander-in-Chief'?", or "We don't believe in [tolerating] those who are silent, since they want to be Commander-in-Chief." Again, presidents have to speak constantly and under trying circumstances, so they deserve some exemption from grammatical nitpicking; but when on the attack and questioning the character of others, their charges should be unambiguous.

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[5] It secured Iraq against all odds:

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[6] Obama is demagoguing: <http://althouse.blogspot.com/2011/10/obama-must-serve-something-to-assembled.html>

[7] to disassociate himself:

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