

Obama: Amaze us!

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Region: [USA](#)

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✘ As Barack Obama approaches the helm of the American ship of state, he is facing many challenges.

Just as she was being born at the dawn of her journey into history, the American nation is poised on the brink of a new beginning. In those revolutionary times, America faced a roiling sea of danger, uncertainty and trepidation. Today, after more than two centuries of venture, America moves forward beyond and away from the final and most tragic acts of the second Bush presidency.

The American journey has been filled with triumph and tragedy. Triumph over the bonds of colonialism transformed into the tragedy of slavery, Manifest Destiny and the genocide of Native Americans followed by Civil War. Abolition began to right the wrongs of slavery, but America careened forward into the excesses of the Gilded Age and the arrogance of her Imperialist Presidency that extended her empire to the islands of the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.

The Roosevelts expanded the American vision to encompass economic justice, environmental preservation and the duty to deliver peace beyond our borders. At the same time, American philosophers advocated the virtue of selfishness, the goodness of greed and the siren song of supply side trickle down economic miracles, while Martin Luther King, Jr. marched to the beat of a different drummer to demand the fulfillment of civil rights for our black brothers and sisters.

In an ancient scenario, the culture of greed infiltrated the American defense establishment and commandeered the ship of state to instigate conflicts and to impose its will by force. American power came into conflict with competing ideologies promising a better and more just society through cooperation rather than competition. For more than three-quarters of a century, America has moved forward toward its promise of freedom for all her people: freedom of speech; freedom of religion; freedom from want and freedom from fear.

✘ As Barack Obama approaches the dais to take his oath of office, he is focused on delivering the four freedoms to all Americans. Each of FDR's four freedoms is in danger in America today. Freedom of speech was curtailed in pursuit of solidarity against the Axis of Evil in the War on Terror. Freedom of religion is under threat as Muslims are treated like criminals and terrorists. Freedom from want is on its deathbed, for millions of Americans have been expelled from their homes, banished from their workplaces and shunned by their employers. Freedom from fear has vanished, as Americans are convulsed in a paroxysm of panic apprehensive about their financial security and in fear for their very lives.

Barack Obama faces an insurmountable Himalaya of fear. In its face, Obama brings a message of hope for change. Obama erases fear with the promise of hope. Now he must turn to the people of America and deliver the four freedoms they have been promised.

Obama faces anxiety over the economy. While there are differences of opinion about what must be done and what must not be done, Obama has few choices. Obama's errant predecessor capitulated to the demands of his capitalist coterie for massive federal bailouts of financial institutions. With the bloated banking system now in bankruptcy, the calls for government regulation from Wall Street and the Federal Reserve will herald the beginning of state capitalism, a propagandistic oxymoron for a socialized banking system. While the incomes of financiers, bankers and others will shrivel, the confidence of the American people will be restored. The new American banking system will resemble a vast public utility, where salaries are strictly limited and profits are regulated.

But, the American people fear for their very lives today. Faced with the rapacious appetite for corporate profit that no population of any other industrialized nation faces, Americans spend more than twice what citizens of other democracies spend for their healthcare. In order to restore the freedom from fear, Obama must deliver a better system for healthcare that will be nothing less than revolutionary for it must delete the profitability of illness, injury and disease from the national vocabulary. The people of America are suffering through a stupefying crescendo of ghoulish greed that is pervasive throughout the healthcare industry. Obama believes that healthcare is a human right that government must deliver to a free people to ensure that they do not experience fears for their own lives.

✘ But, Americans fear for more than their financial futures and their health, they fear for their very existence under threat from those who would destroy the fabric of our society – the terrorists. Bush launched his War on Terror to galvanize political support for a Gotterdammerung of Islamist terrorists. In the process, Bush triggered a massive avalanche of fear within America that has led to two immoral and counterproductive wars in Asia. America's standing in the world has been toppled from the top of a tall column. For the world at large, the Statue of Liberty has lost all meaning. America's prestige has morphed into a global loathing of the stars and stripes. In 2008, America has become the most feared and hated nation on earth.

Like no other president before him, Obama faces a global challenge to America's faltering leadership. To address the global challenge, Obama must replace opprobrium with trust and restore equilibrium with peace. American Muslims must be freed from the burdens of ostracism, stereotyping and the prison of Guantanamo. But, the closure of Guantanamo will be only the first step. The American prison population has inflated beyond all sense of reason. Alone among all other nations, America imprisons one out of every one hundred of its citizens. For shame, more American prisoners are from the black and tan minorities rather than from the white majority. The American prison-industrial complex has transformed the land of the free into a police state where minorities are incarcerated for misdemeanors while whites go free for felonies. Obama must right this terrible wrong that tarnishes America's luster in the eyes of the world.

Even more importantly, Obama must forge a new foreign policy that does not genuflect to the Pentagon and resort to military interventions and wars to enforce American power by the simplistic application of force — for force has failed America in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. In the Information Age, hard power is indeed outmoded, outdated,

obsolete and counterproductive. Soft power is now the only instrument available for forging ahead on the global seas of commerce, ecology and culture.



Obama's global challenges are manifold, but none more difficult than in the Middle East. In recent days, hard power inflicted pain and destruction in the Arab-Israeli conflict. America's involvement in the Middle East has not delivered peace or security of the freedom from fear to the peoples of the Middle East. Since the Camp David Accords and the Oslo Agreement, the Middle East has devolved into conflict and crisis. Under George W. Bush, American policy made the insufferable situation worse by launching the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and unwise favoritism in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nowhere does Obama face a more difficult challenge than in the Middle East, but in challenge therein resides opportunity - a unique opportunity to redefine America's vision in the eyes of the world.

On Wednesday, the 21st of January 2009, Barack Obama will enter the Oval Office where he will wield the power of the American nation. On that date, the world will judge him for the priorities he engages from the very outset of his presidency.

While he has promised America that he will order the cessation of torture, the withdrawal from Iraq, the final phase of the war in Afghanistan and the restructuring of American involvement with the Arab-Israeli conflict, Obama's global reputation will be cast in the flames of the forge.

In that moment and in the others rapidly to come, we shall learn the extent and the tenor of the change Obama will bring - not only to America but to the tiny planet where he will be the most powerful leader in world history, a leader for all peoples - for better or worse - and it is indeed quite difficult to imagine how he might be worse than George W. Bush.

✘ President Obama, the time is now ripe. Bring on all the changes you have promised from sea to shining sea and from nation unto nation - you must now bring peace unto all the nations of the earth. We, Americans who summoned and supported you are waiting; the

nations are gazing intently upon you. Amaze us.

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