

THE PRESIDENCY OF BARACK OBAMA: THE FIRST TERM

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ROOSEVELT REDUX



- THE NEW DEAL: INTERVENTIONIST, WELFARE STATE, REGULATORY STATE
- FIRST NEW DEAL-RECOVERY & RELIEF (N.R.A., A.A.A., F.E.R.A., T.V.A.)
- SECOND NEW DEAL-REFORM & RECONSTRUCTION (N.L.R., SOCIAL SECURITY, WEALTH TAX ACT)
- “SOLDIER OF FREEDOM” (USE OF MILITARY POWER AS A GLOBAL DEMOCRATIC FORCE)

SUI GENERIS: THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY



- CENTRIST DEMOCRAT: BOLD LIBERAL CRITIC
- PROGRESSIVE HEIR: USE OF FEDERAL POWER FOR WELFARE STATE OBJECTIVES
- “COLORED COSMOPOLITANISM”: A SINGULAR PRESIDENCY GROUNDED IN AFRICAN AMERICAN AND INTERNATIONAL SENSIBILITIES

OBAMA'S NEW DEAL



- HEALTH CARE AND THE TRUMAN TEMPLATE

Truman declared in 1945 “a national health insurance program is a logical extension of the present social security system...of the four basic risks to the security of working people and their families-unemployment, old age, death, and sickness-we have provided some insurance protection against three...protection against the fourth-sickness-is the major missing element in our national social insurance program.”

Truman proposed a program open to all who would pay a monthly fee to the federal government and all health expenses would be covered...to Truman this initiative constituted an expansion of the Social Security system. A broad coalition of opponents, however, including the American Medical Association, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, farm groups, and the American Legion, killed the bill.

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (2010)



- Enacted by votes of 219 to 212 in the U. S. House of Representatives and a simple majority in the U. S. Senate. The law expanded Medicaid eligibility. No one with a pre-existing condition could be denied health coverage by any insurer and all were mandated to get health insurance either through an employer, through existing private insurance options, through a special market set up through the legislation or through the existing structure of Medicare and Medicaid. President Obama disappointed “progressives” when he did pursue a “public option.”

RESCUE OF THE AUTO INDUSTRY



- Despite the passage of T.A.R.P., enacted in the waning days of the George W. Bush Administration in response to the 2008 economic crisis, the auto industry remained distressed. President Obama noted in his autobiography, *A PROMISE LAND*, that “bad management, bad cars, foreign competition, underfunded pensions, soaring health care costs, an overreliance on the sale of high-margin, gas-guzzling SUVs.” He impaneled a White House Auto Task Force to deal mainly with G.M. & Chrysler. The latter company, however, was in the worse shape. Aid to Chrysler would profoundly impact about twenty cities in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. The federal assistance to Chrysler was in the form of a \$7.6 billion loan that was repaid to both the U.S. and Canadian governments. This federal intervention was reminiscent of Herbert Hoover’s R.F.C. (1932) and Franklin D. Roosevelt’s N.I.R.A. (1933).

THE OBAMA DOCTRINE



- According to Jeremy Suri, President Obama espoused “...a liberal internationalist vision-emphasizing multilateralism, negotiation, and disarmament-after eight years of aggressive neo-conservative militarism under President George W. Bush.” He believed in a “limited use of force to build peace and law in troubled areas.” Additionally, said Suri, the Obama doctrine included diplomacy and law, and a vow to eschew overwhelming American dominance, forward military action, regime change, or support for favorable dictators.

OBAMA OVERTURE TO THE MUSLIM WORLD AT CAIRO UNIVERSITY SPEECH (2009)



- “...tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations.” He added that “violent extremists have exploited these tensions in a small but potent minority of Muslims” Then, “so long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace...I’ve come to Cairo to seek a new beginning...America is not-and never will be-at war with Islam...we plan to invest \$1.5 billion each year over the next five years to partner with Pakistanis to build schools and hospitals, roads, and business...we are providing more than \$2.8 billion to help build Afghans develop their economy.” Moreover, democracy needed to be promoted in the Middle East.

“JUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE:” PRESIDENT OBAMA ON BIN LADEN’S CAPTURE & EXECUTION (2011)



- “...the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda, and a terrorist who’s responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women, and children...we went to war against al Qaeda to protect our citizens, our friends, and our allies.” No war against Islam was conducted. Though Pakistan was invaded without its knowledge, the president of that nation later said that the operation was appropriate.