

President Obama Deserves a Chance



Recently, a visitor to Mr. Goldberg's Facebook page articulated a strong desire for the Republicans to stop preventing President Obama from doing his job. He expressed annoyance with their refusal to accept a Democrat doing something good for the country, and he complained that "they won't even give him a chance."

It's an argument that I've been hearing more and more lately, both from the news media and online bloggers. So, I thought about it for a bit, and I think they may just have a point.

You've really got to feel bad for President Obama, after all. The United States faces so many problems today, and none of them are his fault. If he could fix these problems, he would. But NO president in his situation could.

Just look at the economic crisis alone, which he inherited from George W. Bush. That idiot Bush screwed up things so badly that NO president could have possibly been expected to fix the mess overnight. And by "overnight", I'm of course talking about Obama's first term in office. Really, his second term too, as the president himself recently suggested. Think about it: Bush spent eight years destroying the country. It shouldn't be a surprise that it would take AT LEAST that long to fix it... right?

And just look at the political environment Obama is forced to deal with today. The Republicans control one of the branches of congress, for God's sake! How can Obama be expected to get

ANYTHING done under those circumstances? Sure, his fellow Democrats still hold the U.S. Senate, but there's no real power there. The power lies with those Tea Party extremists in the House who are dead set on preventing the president from fixing Bush's mess. David Gregory had it right on 'Meet the Press' back in October when he said that the president "can't do a whole lot about the economy right now". Of course he can't! If he could, we'd obviously be enjoying economic prosperity right now!

And don't even get me started on Iraq. The president never supported that unpopular war started by George W. Bush in the first place (I'll give Hillary and V.P. Joe a pass on their support of it. They were under a lot of pressure after all). So, how can we expect Obama to be responsible for what happens in Iraq now that we've pulled our remaining troops out of the country? Sure, there's been a significant uptick in violence that began with our withdraw – violence that our military commanders predicted and warned the president about... but how can we possibly blame Obama for that? It was George W. Bush, after all, that negotiated the 2012 withdraw date with the Iraqis. How can ANY president be expected to renegotiate an extension, in accordance with his military's recommendations, beyond a previous administration's agreement? It just can't be done! Reporter Richard Engel had it right on NBC's 'Today Show' a couple of weeks ago when he explained that the president "did not have a choice but to leave."

What's REALLY bothersome is when people try to blame President Obama for adding roughly \$5 trillion to the national debt in three years. What people need to realize is that he had no other choice! ANY president would have had to do it! If he hadn't ratcheted up federal spending to unfathomable levels, we would have gone into an economic depression! What else could he have done? And how can Obama pay down the national debt when Republicans won't let him raise taxes on millionaires? They've got his hands tied! With no workable

plan to address the debt, CBS News' Scott Pelley was right in November when he presented the question, "Did Congress kill the recovery?".

If only President Obama was given a chance to save the country, he'd be able to show us the successes he's really capable of. Instead, he's been subjected to nothing but binding obstructionism. And if you're even THINKING about pointing out that Obama's party held majorities in both branches of the U.S. congress during his first two years in office, which should have allowed the president to do anything he wanted, have you already forgotten how busy he was dealing with the mess Bush left him? Not to mention that Obama was preoccupied with numerous painstaking challenges that most administrations are thankfully spared from: Combating Somali pirates, mediating sensitive racial conflicts over beer, accepting international peace prizes, and dealing with public relation fallouts from oil drilling accidents... just to name a few. He and the Democrats worked so tirelessly during those first two years that they didn't even have time to read their own Affordable Care Act, for goodness sake!

All I'm asking from Obama's critics is to just give the man a **chance** to succeed. It's unreasonable to expect a president to inherit a poor economy and turn it in the right direction by the end of his first term. It's unreasonable to expect a president to deal effectively with foreign policy challenges that existed before he took office. It's unreasonable to expect a president to achieve success with divided government. If we just give President Obama a chance (aka, re-elect him), I have no doubt that he can rise from the depths of being only the fourth greatest president of all time (an arguably modest self-assessment) to his rightful place as the greatest president there will ever be.

He just needs the opportunity. Is that so much to ask for?

Edit: For those of you who aren't familiar with my columns:

Yes, that was indeed tongue-in-cheek.