

Barack Obama
44th president of the United States



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GREG GROESCH AND PHOTOS BY KATIE FALKENBERG/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President's agenda as agent of change

By **CHRISTINA BELLANTONI**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Confronted with the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression and a nation tiring of an unpopular war, President Obama has set forth a fast-paced agenda aimed at changing policies, priorities and perceptions on several fronts in his first 100 days in office.

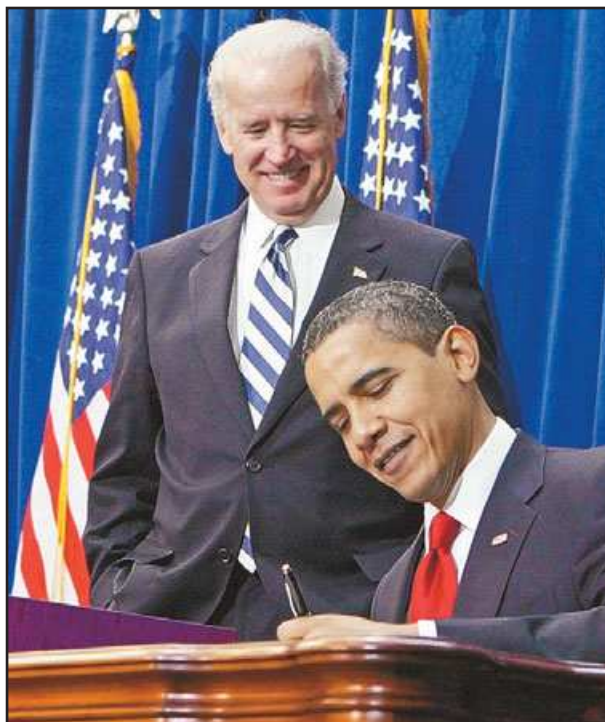
On the domestic front, Mr. Obama has commanded the Democratic majorities in Congress to pass a \$787 billion stimulus plan to jolt the economy, while proposing record government spending in a budget that raises taxes on the rich to fund education, health care and environmental programs. He has exerted unprecedented authority in the marketplace, most notably in the auto industry, and has removed long-held federal funding restrictions on embryonic stem-cell research and on international nongovernmental organizations that perform abortions.

On the world front, the new president has vowed to close the U.S. military's detention center for terrorism suspects at the U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and set a timeline for withdrawing combat troops from Iraq and ordered 21,000 more troops to Afghanistan for a war Mr. Obama said has been neglected. He has faced nuclear threats from North Korea and Iran, eased restrictions on travel by Cuban-Americans to Cuba and even authorized a shoot-to-kill rescue mission for a U.S. tanker captain held by Somali pirates.

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ASSOCIATED PRESS
President Obama signs the \$787 billion economic-stimulus bill in Denver in February, as Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. looks on. In his first 100 days, Mr. Obama has set out to engineer change on several fronts.



THE FIRST 100 DAYS

OBAMA

From page E1

Mr. Obama also barnstormed across Europe seeking cooperation from nations that had turned their back on the United States during the final days of the Bush presidency and had blamed America for the global fiscal crisis, and he attended a summit of Latin American and Caribbean leaders, where he was greeted warmly by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, a longtime critic of U.S. policies in general and the Bush administration specifically.

Though polls show that most voters approve of how Mr. Obama has performed, his start in Washington has been messy in some cases, such as public spats with television pundits, conservative talk-show hosts and even former Vice President Dick Cheney; and he's had an embarrassing series of Cabinet-vetting problems.

The Democratic president recently angered liberals by releasing memos showing that the Bush administration allowed what they regard as torture of detained terrorist suspects but then saying he wouldn't pursue prosecution of Bush officials. After liberal groups started petition drives seeking a deeper investigation, Mr. Obama said his attorney general's office would decide whether the authors of the interrogation policy would face any consequences, an about-face that enraged conservatives.

Mr. Obama called it "one of the tougher decisions I have had to make," but not all of his supporters are satisfied.

"I am a bit peeved, to say the

Meanwhile, Mr. Obama has a lot of promises to keep — having offered more campaign pledges than the previous two presidents.

least, about his 'looking forward and not back' approach to what I believe were crimes perpetrated by the Bush administration," said liberal activist Rick Hegdahl, an Iraq war veteran from the Seattle area. "No one out here in the world outside the D.C. bubble would ever have that kind of treatment accorded them for committing any crimes of that magnitude [or lesser]. I hope that more justice is forthcoming."

Yet even administration critics say Mr. Obama has shown his inexperience relatively few times as he has bypassed the filter of Washington's media and communicated with taxpayers in frank terms and by less traditional means. Telegenic at 47, Mr. Obama has infused the American people with his talking points. Promising "the road ahead will be long" on such a regular basis, he has remained widely popular.

Promises to keep

Polls show that Mr. Obama has delivered a confidence boost as Americans increasingly believe the nation is on the "right track" — receiving higher numbers than recent presidents.

White House aides trumpet Mr. Obama's accomplishments — from tax cuts to transparency and the signing of a host of Democrat-written bills they say signal a new direction for the middle class.

Obama critics see it differently, saying he's done too much apologizing for former President George W. Bush's actions and is statistically rated the most partisan chief executive in modern time.

Mr. Obama has avoided major losses in his first 100 days — his legislation has been passed, he's had nothing to veto and his party has remained unified.

But soon, he will have to deal with legislation such as the energy bill, over which the Democrats may be divided, and he will need Republican votes to send the measure to his desk.

"That's going to get hard," said Julian Zelizer, a presidential historian and professor from Princeton University.

An early April report from Pew Research found Mr. Obama to be the most polarizing president in four decades — with the widest gap between members of his own party who view him favorably and members of the other party who strongly disapprove of his plans.

Meanwhile, Mr. Obama has a lot of promises to keep — having offered more campaign pledges than the previous two presidents.

PolitiFact.com, a service run by the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times, has created an "Obameter" to track each promise Mr. Obama has made since he first became a candidate for president in February 2007. According to its calculations, he has kept 26 promises, compromised on seven and has broken six. The rest are either stalled (three), in the works (61) or haven't been acted upon (411).

Among his broken promises was a pledge to post nonemergency leg-

islation for public comment online five days before signing. He also has not ended the income tax for seniors earning less than \$50,000, and he has not created a \$3,000 tax credit for companies that hire new workers.

Many of his promises, such as "restoring our moral standing," were conceptual rather than specific, and polls show he's been able to achieve success even as many of the policies have yet to be solidified.

"Almost all of Obama's accomplishments so far have been rhetorical, rather than policy-based," Alex Conant, the former Republican National Committee spokesman who followed the Democrat's every speech during the campaign, wrote recently on his blog.

"Inherited" economy

Since his inaugural address, Mr. Obama has said that many of the problems facing the nation were "inherited" from the Bush administration and a Washington political system more likely to bicker than solve challenges.

The president has reminded taxpayers frustrated with Wall Street bailouts and executive bonuses that his team didn't craft the Troubled Assets Relief Program, saying he would have done it differently. He also was quick to say in the face of furor over American International Group's bonus scandal that he, too, was angry. "We didn't draft these contracts," he said.

But as House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn, South Carolina Democrat, said just before the inauguration, Mr. Obama's party would soon own the bad economy.

"This is a learning curve for all of us, controlling both the Congress and the White House," Mr. Clyburn said. "We will be held responsible for everything. We can only blame Bush for about two or three more weeks."

Mr. Obama followed through quickly on what he said was priority No. 1 by signing, less than a month into his term, a \$787 billion economic-stimulus bill that passed Congress with just three Republican votes.

It boosts unemployment benefits and cuts taxes for working families — an average of \$65 per paycheck — and funnels money for construction and new roads to state and local governments. The package also offers tax benefits for buying a new car or home this year, increases college education credits and funds small-business loan programs.

The Obama administration estimates the stimulus plan will ultimately "save or create" more than 3 million jobs, but it acknowledges there will continue to be job losses all year.

Mr. Obama also signed an earmark-laden, \$410 billion budget left over from the final year of the Bush administration to keep the government operating. At the time, he and his aides said the \$7 billion in earmarks were a mere fraction compared with the size of the budget, an argument that rang hollow this month when the president trumpeted his order for Cabinet members to carve a total of \$100 million from agency budgets.

"A \$100 million there, a \$100 million here, pretty soon, even in Washington, it adds up to real money," Mr. Obama said.

Congress passed its own version of the \$3.6 trillion budget Mr. Obama presented, but there are still intense negotiations ahead, and the president may not get some of the policy changes his blueprint calls for, namely on climate change and health care.

Mr. Obama also "inherited" an ailing auto industry, with the nation's top car manufacturers getting \$17 billion last year in a federal bailout. As the companies said they face more troubles, he gave Chrysler limited time to shape up or file for bankruptcy, and he forced out General Motors' chief executive. The president also said the government will guarantee auto warranties.

David Walker, a former chief of the Government Accounting Office who now heads the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, said it's good Mr. Obama promises to tackle the long-term fiscal problems of entitlement reform, but "he's yet to lay out any proposals or even a process for how we are going to be able to address those issues once we turn the corner on the economy."

He said Mr. Obama will need to start making "long overdue tough choices" on structural problems with Social Security and Medicare that will help the U.S. "avoid a much bigger problem down the road."

Mr. Walker acknowledges Mr. Obama stepped into office facing difficult circumstances — an already \$1.2 trillion deficit, rising unemployment and a recession.

"On one hand, he deserves a lot of credit for exerting leadership; but on the other hand, his budget proposal includes a number of expansions and additional spending that — while they might be consistent with campaign promises — need to be reconsidered because of our debt," Mr. Walker said.

Change to believe in

Donald A. Ritchie, associate historian with the Senate Historical Office, said Mr. Obama "measures well" against successful presidents

and "better" than the unsuccessful ones, but he added it is hard to judge when the president's party enjoys a congressional majority.

Many of the new initiatives signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, for example, had been passed by Congress but vetoed by Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover.

"There's a bit of that in what's going on now. These initial measures are things that didn't happen in the past eight years," Mr. Ritchie said.

Like President Bill Clinton did with the Family and Medical Leave Act when he took office, Mr. Obama has chosen to enact legislation that the previous president had vetoed: federal funding of embryonic stem-cell research and a major expansion of the health insurance program for poor children.

Mr. Obama also has championed a bill that makes it easier for workers to claim pay discrimination based on gender and has boosted the Serve America Act, expanding programs such as AmeriCorps while encouraging volunteerism.

Among the less-talked-about items on the first-100-days scorecard are measures Mr. Obama signed to require better fuel-efficiency standards, protections for wildlife and more open disclosure practices in government.

Mr. Zelizer dismissed those who have compared Mr. Obama's policies to Roosevelt's New Deal, saying that was a time in which the president and Congress were "literally building government."

"It's much smaller on scale and scope, even if now it looks big," he said.

He said comparisons to President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" are more accurate, since Mr. Obama is moving government into areas where it hadn't been before, particularly with "dramatic interventions" in the financial sector.

"For modern presidents, we haven't seen anything like this in a long time," Mr. Zelizer said.

Foreign affairs

Besides struggling with an ailing economy amid a global recession, Mr. Obama has had to focus on two wars, one that he considered as having been neglected and the other a prolonged conflict that he had opposed from the start.

He orchestrated a policy review with the help of Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, a holdover from the Bush administration, and announced that he would withdraw all combat troops from Iraq by Aug. 31, 2010. He also ordered a surge of 21,000 troops to Afghanistan, saying they have a limited mission, but he still drew protests from antiwar groups and pushback from some Democrats. The president also is sending resources to Pakistan.

Mr. Obama recorded a message of friendship for the Iranian New Year, telling Iranians he aims for a "future with renewed exchanges among our people, and greater opportunities for partnership and commerce . . . where the old divisions are overcome, where you and all of your neighbors and the wider world can live in greater security and greater peace." He was rebuffed by Iranian leadership, but has said he remains hopeful there can be progress.

He also visited a mosque in Turkey before a surprise visit to Iraq.

Anthony H. Cordesman of the Center for Strategic & International Studies said Mr. Obama has gone a long way in recovering "much of America's lost prestige and popularity in a matter of months."

Shrinath Sundaram, a former Californian working in India and closely following the president's actions, agreed.

"With the incoming president having to clean the mess created over the past seven years, the task was not only onerous and demanding, but was spread across many fronts," he said, rating the president with high marks for boosting diplomacy.

This month also marked Mr. Obama's first national security test, as aides had to wake him in the pre-dawn hours to tell him North Korea had tested a nuclear weapon.

Mr. Obama called the launch "provocative," and the incident helped boost his message of the day — calling for global cooperation to rid the world of nuclear weapons. He forged an agreement with Russia to restart arms control discussions.

A new challenge faced the president soon after, when Somali pirates took an American-flagged ship. Mr. Obama authorized a Navy SEALs mission to rescue the merchant ship's captain.

In another shift from the Bush era, Mr. Obama modified the U.S. policy toward Cuba, stripping the strictest restrictions on family travel. The administration is considering its next move and whether to further ease the decades-old embargo against the communist-run island.

Mistakes

The mistakes Mr. Obama has made in several instances can be summed up as needing a do-over.

It started with his swearing-in, when Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. flubbed the oath of office. The following day, White House lawyers thought it made sense to have the president take the oath again during a private ceremony, just in case.

His choice of Gary Locke for commerce secretary was a case of third time's the charm: The president lost his first two nominees — one to an ethics investigation and the other due to partisan differences.

Mr. Obama was lauded for a speedy transition — hiring early for key administration posts and quickly naming his Cabinet — but hit a big roadblock when several of his nominees faced tax issues and two withdrew from consideration.

The Treasury Department,



which Mr. Obama says hasn't faced such daunting challenges since the time of Alexander Hamilton, remains understaffed, and Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner has been off to a rough start with the AIG bonus scandal and some clumsy public appearances.

Another big problem for the Obama administration came as he proposed requiring veterans to use private insurance. He backed down within days as the idea was met with loud opposition.

Liberal-leaning David Sirota blogged at Open Left that many of Mr. Obama's campaign promises seem empty.

He cited Mr. Obama's dismissal of his changing stance on Cuba policy, referring to his original position as something he made "eons ago" when running for the U.S. Senate in 2004. Mr. Sirota said it's "inappropriate" for any politician to express such sentiment, which he said is "cynical," especially coming from the man with the hopeful rhetoric.

Mr. Sirota similarly complained that the administration has signaled it won't be renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement as promised on the campaign trail.

"If politicians tell us they believe their campaign promises are a joke, then they make our whole political process a joke," he wrote. "The fact is, you can't sow hope and cynicism at the same time — those two don't go together."

AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA:

THE DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING CRISIS IS DEEPENING BUT HAS RECEIVED SCANT ATTENTION IN YOUR FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE.



U.S. Business and Industry Council

Fighting for American companies
Fighting for American jobs

Dear Mr. President:

The 1,900 manufacturing companies of the U.S. Business and Industry Council are anxious to help you lead America and the world out of the economic crisis into a new era of genuinely healthy, sustainable growth. Our members are reliable stakeholders in America – highly productive, innovative, non-offshoring manufacturers with long track records of investing in the United States and of creating good jobs here at home. We offer the following observations:

- Yes, there is a crisis in the financial sector that requires attention, but there is a larger, cascading, and potentially more devastating crisis in the manufacturing sector, which unlike banking actually creates wealth.
- To date, your economic team's approach seems to be trillions for banks, but hardly a dime for manufacturing. You save wrong-doing financial houses from failure, but send good-faith, if sometimes poorly run, manufacturing companies into bankruptcy – a formula for disaster.
- The current economic crisis is ultimately rooted in America's longstanding failure to produce as much as it consumes. Without doing so, we cannot create the wealth needed to pay our way in the world and ensure a high standard of living for our citizens at home. Debt-financed "prosperity" was an illusion.
- The economy's productive heart and ability to create wealth is dominated by domestic manufacturing, not banking. The only way forward is for America to make and consume more domestic products, and cut imports and the foreign borrowing necessary to buy them.
- Congress and your Administration have forced the auto companies to submit detailed plans for reorganization, but the government has not put forth any detailed plans for a manufacturing-wide recovery.
- No American company can create a business plan that counters the effects of foreign predatory trade practices: currency manipulation, VAT export rebates, government subsidies, IP theft, industry-government collusion, foreign cartels, dumping, closed markets, etc. This job belongs to Congress and the Executive.
- For years, successive Congresses and Administrations have been unwilling or unable to address major trade cheating while our industrial and technology bases have been decimated – with profound national security consequences.
- No American company will make major investments here at home only to face the same unfair foreign competition – even if the banks do start lending. This includes so-called green manufacturing, which is subject to the same challenges as the rest of manufacturing.
- The solution to our economic problems is not to print enough money to return to the previous unsustainable global trade regime. Rather, we must rebuild those parts of the U.S. economy that actually create wealth within our borders, and therefore restore a prosperity financed by earned income rather than dangerous debt buildup at all levels of our economy.
- To serve as the needed change agent, you will have to administer some "tough love" to trading partners and a world economy still dangerously addicted to exporting to overextended U.S. consumers. This artificial global boom, this Ponzi scheme is now over, whether we and the rest of the world admit it or not.

Mr. President, for the American people's sake and the world's sake, America can only overcome the economic crisis if domestic manufacturers receive the policy help they require to renew our productive capacity, end trade cheating, and restore balance to global markets.

Respectfully,
Kevin L. Kearns
President
U.S. Business and Industry Council



THE FIRST 100 DAYS

Hill allies help Obama push agenda



President Obama discusses his economic-stimulus plan on Capitol Hill in January. Mr. Obama's agenda has benefited from having a large Democratic Congress. ASTRID RIECKEN/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

By KARA ROWLAND
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Obama's lieutenants in Congress have managed to push through much of his economic agenda in his first 100 days, but not without making it clear who ultimately runs the show on Capitol Hill.

Congressional Democrats, led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, stood up to the new president on issues such as spending earmarks and more money for corporate bailouts, also stripping some of his key proposals, like a cap-and-trade approach to global warming, from the budget reconciliation bill.

But the \$787 billion stimulus bill and \$3.6 trillion budgets passed by the House and Senate kept many of Mr. Obama's priorities intact, and Democrats say his first few months have been marked by an unprecedented amount of cooperation with the legislative branch—even if it is overwhelmingly cooperation just with his own party.

“Obviously, there are always little bumps along the way, but on the major issues, everybody's been on the same page, especially with the enactment of the recovery plan,” said Rep. Chris Van Hollen, Maryland Democrat and a top adviser to Mrs. Pelosi.

Wooing the minority

Congressional Democrats started drafting the economic-stimulus bill weeks before Mr. Obama took office on Jan. 20 and had it on his desk within a month of his inauguration. The legislation—the largest-ever spending measure of its kind—included funding for unemployment benefits, food stamps, health care subsidies and aid to states. The president got most of what he wanted, though his key-stone “Make Work Pay” middle-class tax cut was sliced in half.

More important, he failed to get one ingredient he desperately wanted: bipartisanship.

Mr. Obama not only called for Republican input, he traveled to the Capitol to meet with the entire House Republican conference for a 45-minute discussion during his first days. But the meeting proved fruitless—not a single House Republican voted in favor of the stimulus package, arguing they were shut out of the writing process and that the final product was not targeted efficiently and was too light on tax cuts. They drafted a less-costly, tax-cut-laden alternative, which Democratic leaders rejected.

“I thought he did really well when he came to our conference,” Chief Deputy Minority Whip Kevin McCarthy, California Republican, said. “I thought his answers were good. I thought we were respectful; I thought he was respectful.” But “then you had Speaker Pelosi introduce the bill and never allow bipartisanship to take place, and then he made a decision that he just had to have it,” Mr. McCarthy said.

Republicans also criticized Democrats for rushing the bill through with limited time for debate, which Mr. McCarthy blamed for the subsequent controversy over American International Group Inc. bonus payments, which were protected by a provision slipped into the legislation. In a floor speech, Minority Leader John A. Boehner, Ohio Republican, dropped the 1,000-plus-page bill on the ground, noting that no member had time to read the bill before voting on it.

Democrats countered by saying they did appeal to Republicans by



Mr. Obama, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Minority Leader John A. Boehner, Ohio Republican, mark the Lincoln Bicentennial in February at the Capitol. Lincoln is said to be the new president's favorite predecessor. KATIE FALKENBERG/THE WASHINGTON TIMES

including tax relief and other provisions to the bill, to no avail.

“No one expects the minority part to support everything that the majority is advancing, but there have been opportunities for selective cooperation,” Mr. Van Hollen said. “Clearly, they've opted for confrontation over any kind of cooperation.”

Despite a momentary roadblock in the Senate, the bill passed after three moderate Republicans helped cut more than \$100 billion from the final price tag. All Democrats voted in favor of the bill while all other Republicans voted against it.

Some Republicans are willing to cut Mr. Obama a break. In fact, early on in the administration, Republican leaders' strategy was to praise Mr. Obama's efforts and blame congressional Democrats for undermining his policies and his pledges of bipartisanship.

But others said they're an inseparable team.

“It's my suspicion that this may be the most expensive and most destructive 100 days in American history,” said Rep. Tom Price, of Georgia, chairman of the conservative Republican Study Committee. “I sincerely believe he took a popular election victory from people looking for solutions and instead turned it into an onslaught and an opportunity to push his far-left agenda.”

Success

Despite the fights, Congress has given Mr. Obama plenty of early victories.

With some Republican votes, Democrats passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act aimed at eliminating wage discrimination, a long-stalled bill to expand government-sponsored health insurance for children, and what supporters called the most far-reaching land conservation bill in decades. Congress also approved a \$6 billion measure to expand government-supported service programs.

“It's really been remarkable the things he's already gotten passed and already gotten done, and all the while remaining exceedingly popular,” said Brendan Daly, spokesman for Mrs. Pelosi.

Though some of Mr. Obama's Cabinet nominees have withdrawn facing tax problems, most of those who have come up for confirmation votes in the Senate have passed easily.

Mr. Obama has also benefited from a Democratic Congress that is still focused on investigating the eight years of former President George W. Bush, and that has not yet turned to scrutinizing the new president.

The president and Democrats have been aided by outside interest

groups who have helped push their agenda, and Mr. Obama himself has been active in pushing Congress. Mr. Van Hollen said there's been “a very active two-way street from one end of Pennsylvania Avenue to the other.”

“An awful lot was accomplished in 100 days, and I think you do have to go back a very long way to find a comparable period,” Mr. Van Hollen said.

Though Mr. Obama saw many key provisions in his sweeping \$3.6 trillion budget proposal stripped by Democratic budget chiefs, the White House insisted the plans from both chambers were “98 percent the same” as the president's.

On most occasions, Democratic leaders in Congress have been some of Mr. Obama's biggest cheerleaders. Many have credited his status as a former senator while others have cited his high approval ratings, but either way the president has benefited from their willingness to plug his broad policy goals or go on the attack so he can remain above the fray.

Donald A. Ritchie, associate historian with the Senate Historical Office, credited Mr. Obama's career as a legislator for his successful record with Congress so far.

“His administration has recognized that it's a two-way street,” he said. “Obama has recognized it's not

the president demanding things and Congress responding, something Jimmy Carter never understood.”

Mr. Ritchie said many presidents—the modern ones who all had been governors first—treated Congress like a large state legislature, and didn't understand the give and take.

“Presidents who have a better sense of what's going on in Congress tend to get things done over the long term,” he said, adding that congressional members feel comfortable around Mr. Obama. “They used to be on a first-name basis with this man.”

Sen. Carl Levin noted as much during Mr. Obama's pre-inauguration visit to the Senate Democratic luncheon.

“We all know him as a friend,” Mr. Levin, Michigan Democrat, told The Washington Times in January. “It was hard not to call him Barack.”

Mr. Obama's choice of former Rep. Rahm Emanuel to be chief of staff has helped with White House outreach, and Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., a 36-year veteran of the Senate, has acted as a key liaison between the administration and Congress.

Dissonance

But Congress has not been shy about asserting itself and reeling Mr. Obama in when he appears to be meddling with their prerogatives.

His first major lesson came in March with consideration of the \$410 billion omnibus spending bill, a bundle of appropriations bills that Democrats had held over from the Bush administration. The package contained around 9,000 earmarks totaling \$8 billion—a feature that fiscal hawks were quick to seize on, citing pet projects such as pig-odor research to hammer congressional leaders for spending money irresponsibly during a recession.

The bill put Mr. Obama in the precarious position of signing a pork-laden bill after he had pledged on the campaign trail to root out wasteful spending. The White House attempted to distance the president from the legislation by referring to it as “last year's business,” though critics, including a vocal Sen. John McCain, his Republican presidential challenger, called on him to veto the bill.

Mr. Obama instead signed the legislation but simultaneously vowed to cut down on pork in the future, spurring even top allies to publicly stand up to him.

“I don't think the White House has the ability to tell us what to do,” House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer told reporters at the time.

Mr. Reid also pushed back on the earmark issue, saying, “We cannot let spending be done by a bunch of nameless, faceless bureaucrats.” But his spokesman, Jim Manley, downplayed any perceived schism. “After eight years of George Bush looking down on the legislative branch of government, we finally once again have a president who respects the institutional prerogatives of Congress,” he said.

Democrats have not been afraid to challenge Mr. Obama's forays in other areas. Sen. Robert C. Byrd, the senior Democrat in the chamber and a fierce guardian of congressional powers, fired off a letter in February to Mr. Obama blasting him for having named so many “czars” to oversee policies.

The czars, who coordinate areas such as climate change and border security, are appointed solely by Mr. Obama and do not need Senate

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THE FIRST 100 DAYS

CONGRESS

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confirmation, which Mr. Byrd makes them unaccountable to Congress.

"The rapid and easy accumulation of power by White House staff can threaten the constitutional system of checks and balances," wrote Mr. Byrd, of West Virginia. "At the worst, White House staff have taken direction and control of programmatic areas that are the statutory responsibility of Senate-confirmed officials."

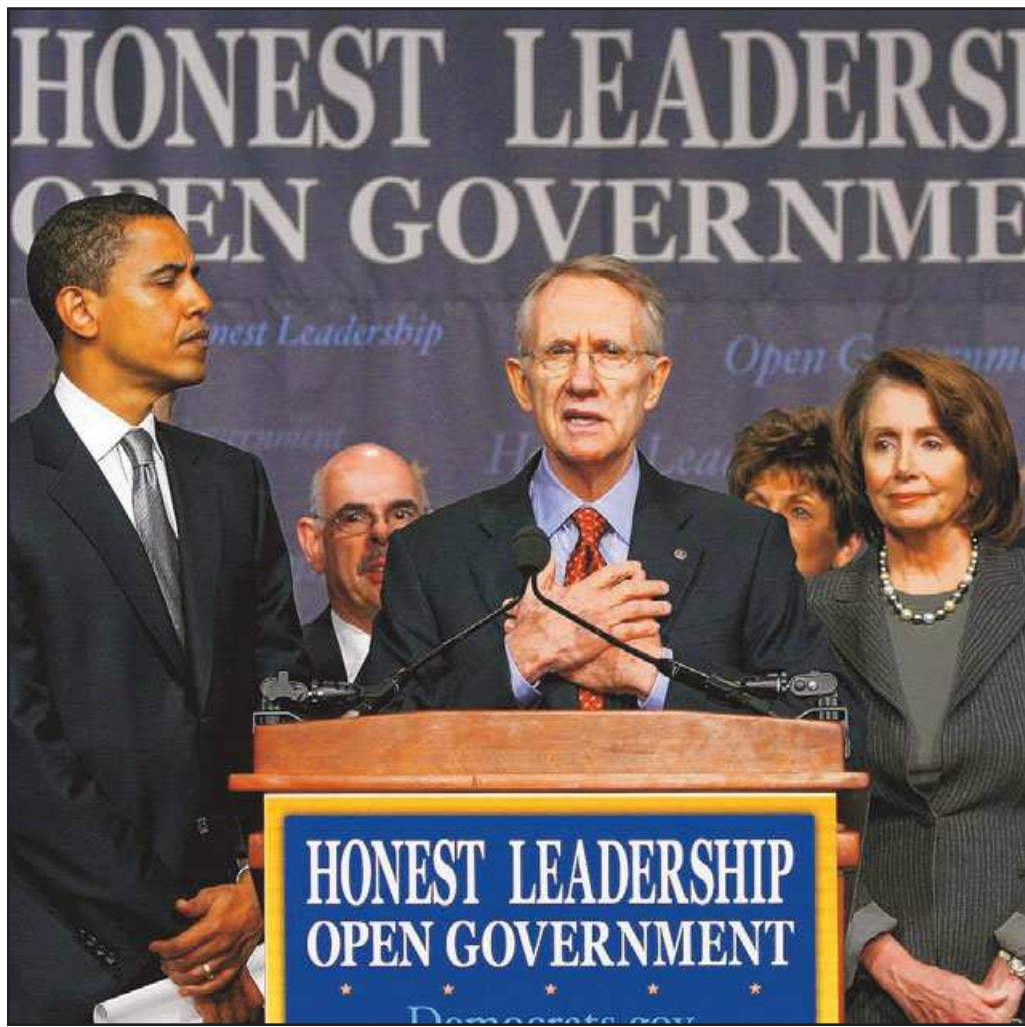
Despite insistence from the White House that the congressional budgets were virtually the same as Mr. Obama's \$3.7 trillion blueprint, House and Senate budget chiefs would not commit to his plans for universal health care and a cap-and-trade approach to global warming, instead including optional language that leaves both matters to Congress.

House Budget Committee Chairman John M. Spratt Jr. of South Carolina and Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad of North Dakota, both Democrats, also sought to cut projected deficits by letting Mr. Obama's signature tax cuts expire after next year and leaving out his \$250 billion request for additional bank-bailout funding.

Nevertheless, both men, along with other congressional leaders, said they preserved most of the president's core priorities.

"Politics is the art of compromise," Mr. Manley said. "I think in each and every one of these things, he laid out some broad parameters and goals, and got much of what he wanted."

But even the slimmed-down versions of Mr. Obama's budget were too expensive for some moderate Democrats to stomach, and 20 House Democrats joined two Senate Democrats in voting against the resolutions, which have yet to go to conference. Not a single House or



In January 2006, then-Sen. Barack Obama and Rep. Nancy Pelosi join Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid in calling on lawmakers to clean up their relationships with lobbyists in the wake of the Jack Abramoff scandal.

Senate Republican voted for the budget, arguing its high debt and deficit totals would place a heavy burden on future generations.

By all accounts, things are only going to get harder for Mr. Obama as Congress starts moving on the tough choices behind his top reform priorities, including an overhaul of the nation's health care system and a plan for curbing carbon emissions.

"No one underestimates the challenge — this is going to be a heavy lift to make some of these changes," Mr. Van Hollen said.

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On energy, one of the president's biggest challenges will be convincing moderate Midwestern Democrats, who wield considerable power in the Senate, to sign onto any kind of program that would hurt coal, gas or oil interests in their home states. He will likewise need to placate several different constituencies in the complex landscape of health care.

Despite the lack of significant bipartisanship thus far, congressional Republicans said they still hold out hope for Mr. Obama's next 100 days.

"We're going to continue to produce ideas and give them to him. We're not going to walk away from the table at all," Mr. McCarthy said.

• Christina Bellantoni contributed to this report.



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ROAD TO RECOVERY CONFERENCE
An all-expense paid educational and service event for wounded heroes and their families.

THE FIRST



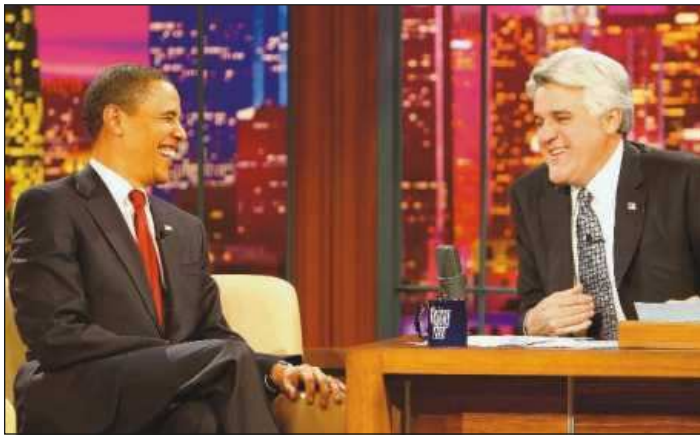
WHITE HOUSE
Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. administers the oath of office to President Obama a second time, in the Map Room of the White House on Jan. 21.



KATIE FALKENBERG/THE WASHINGTON TIMES
Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi listen during a presidential address to Congress on Feb. 24.



ASTRID RIECKEN/THE WASHINGTON TIMES
Mr. Obama holds his first presidential prime-time news conference at the White House on Feb. 9, in which he calls for swift action by Congress to pass his enormous economic-stimulus plan.



ASSOCIATED PRESS
Mr. Obama appears on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno in Burbank, Calif., on March 19, the first sitting president to do so.

Day 1: Jan. 20 — Barack Hussein Obama is sworn in as the 44th president of the United States. An estimated crowd of 2 million gathers on the National Mall for the festivities. In his first decision, Mr. Obama says he wants to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, within 100 days.

Day 2: Jan. 21 — Mr. Obama retakes the oath of office administered by Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. in a private ceremony at the White House. He repeals a 2001 executive order allowing presidents to keep documents secret for longer than 12 years and orders the closure of CIA detention facilities overseas.

Day 3: Jan. 22 — Mr. Obama rolls back interrogation techniques used against terrorism suspects under the Bush administration and signs orders to close the Guantanamo detention center within a year.

Day 4: Jan. 23 — Mr. Obama ends a longstanding ban on the use of U.S. foreign aid funds by international family planning programs that provide abortions.

Day 7: Jan. 26 — Mr. Obama names former Sen. George J. Mitchell as special envoy to the Middle East and signs a directive on fuel-efficiency standards.

Day 8: Jan. 27 — Mr. Obama visits the Capitol for the first time since his swearing-in to marshal support for an \$825 billion stimulus bill. He also addresses the Muslim world via a television interview with Al Arabiya, his first TV interview as president.

Day 9: Jan. 28 — The House passes Mr. Obama's \$819 billion economic stimulus package in a party-line vote. Mr. Obama meets his top leaders at the Pentagon and says "difficult decisions" lie ahead on Iraq and Afghanistan.

Day 10: Jan. 29 — Mr. Obama signs his first law, which allows broader legal claims of pay discrimination. Illinois Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich is impeached on charges of trying to sell Mr. Obama's former Senate seat.

Day 11: Jan. 30 — Mr. Obama signs a series of executive orders that he says should "level the playing field" for labor unions in their struggles with management.

Day 14: Feb. 2 — The closing of the Guantanamo center "will make us safer" Mr. Obama says in an NBC interview. The Senate confirms Eric H. Holder Jr. as the nation's first black attorney general.

Day 15: Feb. 3 — Former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle withdraws his nomination for secretary of health and human services after coming under fire for failing to pay more than \$120,000 in federal taxes. Mr. Obama nominates Republican Sen. Judd Gregg to be commerce secretary.

Day 17: Feb. 5 — Mr. Obama signs the State Children's Health Insurance Program bill, which extends health coverage to 4 million uninsured children, and takes his maiden voyage on Air Force One to attend the House Democrats' annual retreat in Williamsburg, Va.

Day 18: Feb. 6 — Mr. Obama meets with relatives of victims of the bombing of the USS Cole and the Sept. 11 attacks a day after charges are dropped against Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, an al Qaeda suspect held at Guantanamo and accused of masterminding the USS Cole bombing. Mr. Obama issues an executive order backing the use of union labor for large-scale federal construction projects.

Day 21: Feb. 9 — Mr. Obama holds his first presidential news conference, in which he calls for swift action by Congress to pass his economic stimulus plan.

Day 22: Feb. 10 — The Senate passes an \$838 billion economic stimulus bill. Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner outlines plans for the use of \$350 billion in bailout funds previously cleared by Congress.

Day 23: Feb. 11 — The White House and Congress agree on a compromise \$790 billion economic stimulus bill.

Day 24: Feb. 12 — Mr. Gregg withdraws his name from nomination to be commerce secretary.

Day 25: Feb. 13 — Congress passes a \$787 billion stimulus bill.

Day 26: Feb. 14 — Mr. Obama invites the American people to track how the government will spend the \$787 billion in economic stimulus funds by visiting a Web site — www.recovery.gov.

Day 29: Feb. 17 — Mr. Obama signs the \$787 billion stimulus bill in Denver and authorizes the augmentation of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, with 17,000 additional soldiers and Marines.

Day 30: Feb. 18 — Mr. Obama announces a \$275 billion plan to help people who have fallen behind on their mortgage payments or who are unable to refinance because their home's value has fallen below what is owed on the mortgage.

Day 31: Feb. 19 — In his first foreign trip as president, Mr. Obama visits Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Ottawa. The two promise to pursue U.S.-Canada cooperation but postpone decisions on a climate-change agreement.

Day 33: Feb. 21 — Mr. Obama outlines his fiscal 2010 budget, pledging that it "lays out in detail my strategy for investing in what we need, cutting what we don't, and restoring fiscal discipline."

Day 35: Feb. 23 — Mr. Obama says he will reduce by half the \$1.3 trillion federal budget deficit by the end of his first term by employing "pay-as-you-go" rules to federal spending.

Day 36: Feb. 24 — Mr. Obama addresses a joint session of Congress about the economic outlook of the country.

Day 38: Feb. 26 — Mr. Obama officially reveals his budget. The plan includes provisions for a cap-and-trade carbon tax system to combat climate change and for beginning to reform health care, as well as for ending tax breaks for wealthier Americans and extending tax cuts for workers. The budget would increase the federal deficit to \$1.8 trillion in 2009, settling to \$1.2 trillion in 2010.

Day 39: Feb. 27 — Mr. Obama declares that within 18 months American soldiers will no longer be fighting in Iraq and pledges that 35,000 to 50,000 troops will remain to provide support for Iraqi government forces.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GREG GROESCH AND PHOTOS BY KATIE FA...

Day 42: March 2 — Mr. Obama names Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius to head the Department of Health and Human Services. The Justice Department releases Bush-era anti-terror memos that claimed exceptional search-and-seizure powers and divulges that the CIA destroyed nearly 100 videotapes of interrogations of terrorism suspects.

Day 45: March 5 — Mr. Obama holds a daylong White House summit on overhauling "America's broken health care system."

Day 47: March 7 — Mr. Obama is briefed by Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen about the drug wars in Mexico.

Day 49: March 9 — Mr. Obama lifts federal funding restrictions on embryonic stem cell research.

Day 50: March 10 — The Senate passes a \$410 billion measure to fund the government. Mr. Obama calls for tying teachers' pay to student performance and expanding innovative charter schools, ideas that have provoked hostility from members of teachers unions.

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CLINTON

Day 1: Jan. 20, 1993 — William Jefferson Clinton is sworn in as the 42nd president of the United States.

Day 6: Jan. 25 — Mr. Clinton promises to issue an executive order ending the ban on gays in the military and names first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton to head a national task force on health care reform.

Day 10: Jan. 29 — Mr. Clinton orders the military to stop asking recruits whether they are gay and postpones an executive order lifting the ban.

Day 14: Feb. 2 — The White House confirms that the administration is considering a stimulus package of about \$30 billion, equally divided between new spending and tax credits.

Day 50: March 10 — A federal judge rules that Mrs. Clinton's health care reform task force must hold its sessions in public.

Day 66: March 26 — The White House releases the names of 511 members of the health care reform task force.

Day 72: April 1 — Senate Republicans block a \$16.3 billion economic stimulus bill.

Day 90: April 19 — The FBI shoots a chemical agent into the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. Eighty-six Davidians, including children, perish in a huge blaze.

Day 92: April 21 — Mr. Clinton accepts defeat of an economic stimulus bill, after failing for a fourth time to break a Republican filibuster in the Senate.



ASSOCIATED PRESS
President Bill Clinton delivers his inaugural address after taking the oath of office on Jan. 20, 1993. Mr. Clinton would be sworn in for a second term four years later.



ASSOCIATED PRESS
First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton meets with American Indians in March 1993, after a judge ruled that her health care reform task force must hold its sessions in public.

Fire engulfs the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, where 86 Davidians, including leader David Koresh, died in the April 19, 1993, blaze during the Clinton administration.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

REAGAN

Day 1: Jan. 20, 1981 — Ronald Wilson Reagan is sworn in as the 40th president of the United States.

Day 9: Jan. 28 — Mr. Reagan lifts price controls on domestic oil.

Day 14: Feb. 2 — General Motors Corp. reports its first yearly loss in almost 60 years.

Day 19: Feb. 7 — Mr. Reagan signs legislation raising the national debt ceiling from \$935.1 billion to \$985 billion. The U.S. unemployment rate is at 7.4 percent.

Day 31: Feb. 19 — Ford Motor Co. reports a full-year loss of \$1.54 billion, one of the worst yearly losses in U.S. corporate history.

Day 39: Feb. 27 — Chrysler Corp. is promised \$400 million in federal loan guarantees, augmenting aid the company received in 1980.

Day 70: March 30 — Mr. Reagan is shot in the chest after addressing a labor group at the Washington Hilton Hotel. His assailant, John W. Hinckley Jr., also wounds two security men and critically wounds press secretary James Brady.

Day 73: April 2 — The Senate passes a package of \$36.9 billion in spending cuts, nearly \$3 billion more than had been requested by Mr. Reagan for fiscal 1982.

Day 85: April 14 — The world's first reusable spacecraft, Space Shuttle Columbia, returns from its maiden voyage after 54 hours and 36 orbits of the Earth.



ASSOCIATED PRESS
The Space Shuttle Columbia touches down at White Sands Space Harbor in March 1982 after 54 hours in space.



100 DAYS



Capt. Richard Phillips joins his family on April 17 at Burlington International Airport in Vermont after his rescue from Somali pirates by Navy SEAL sharpshooters, who killed three of the pirates.

Mr. Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper walk down the Hall of Honor in Ottawa on Feb. 19, during his first foreign trip as president.



Mr. Obama delivers remarks at Trinity Structural Towers, a windmill tower manufacturing plant, in Newton, Iowa, on April 22, Earth Day. "The choice we face is . . . between prosperity and decline," he said.



UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
Eric H. Holder Jr. is appointed as America's first black attorney general.



ASSOCIATED PRESS
Former Sen. Tom Daschle was forced to pull his nomination for HHS secretary.



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES
Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez presents a book to Mr. Obama critical of U.S. policy in Latin America during the Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad, on April 18.



ALLISON SHELLEY/THE WASHINGTON TIMES
Longtime General Motors Chairman and CEO Rick Wagoner is asked by the Obama administration on March 29 to "step aside."

Day 61: March 21— Mr. Obama welcomes French President Nicolas Sarkozy's request to rejoin the NATO command structure. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, rebuffs Mr. Obama's outreach.

Day 63: March 23 — Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez says Mr. Obama is "ignorant" and has a lot to learn about Latin America.

Day 64: March 24 — Mr. Obama meets with Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and holds his second prime-time news conference. He backs away from his call to deal with climate change as part of the federal budget.

Day 65: March 25 — Mr. Obama talks with NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer about the war in Afghanistan.

Day 66: March 26 — Mr. Obama participates in a first-of-its-kind virtual town hall meeting at the White House, where he pushes his \$3.6 trillion budget.

Day 67: March 27 — Mr. Obama proposes a new war strategy for Afghanistan and calls for the deployment of 4,000 more troops to Afghanistan.

Day 69: March 29 — The White House forces out General Motors Corp. Chief Executive Officer Rick Wagoner.

Day 70: March 30 — Mr. Obama rejects turnaround plans by GM and Chrysler LLC, demanding fresh concessions for long-term federal aid. He also signs the omnibus land conservation bill, breaking his vow to allow five days for public comment before signing legislation.

Day 71: March 31 — Mr. Obama makes his first trip to Europe as president, attending the Group of 20 summit in London.

Day 74: April 3 — Mr. Obama flies to Strasbourg to meet with Mr. Sarkozy and travels by helicopter to Baden-Baden to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Day 75: April 4 — North Korea test-fires a nuclear-capable missile.

Day 77: April 6 — Mr. Obama visits Turkey, his first visit to a Muslim nation as president.

Day 79: April 8 — Pirates hijack a U.S.-flagged cargo ship off the coast of Somalia.

Day 81: April 10 — Mr. Obama says the economy is showing "glimmers of hope" despite continuing stresses.

Day 83: April 12 — Mr. Obama, who said nothing publicly about the five-day standoff with Somali pirates holding an American ship captain, issues a shoot-to-kill order. Three pirates are killed and the hostage is rescued.

Day 84: April 13 — Mr. Obama allows unlimited travel and money transfers by Cuban Americans to their families in Cuba.

Day 87: April 16 — Mr. Obama visits Mexico to meet with Mexican President Felipe Calderon, saying the U.S. must deal "with the flow of guns" going into the country. He also says that CIA officials who used harsh interrogation tactics during the Bush administration will not be prosecuted.

Day 88: April 17 — Mr. Obama attends the fifth Summit of the Americas in Trinidad, gathering with leaders of 33 Latin American nations.

Day 90: April 19 — Mr. Obama participates in the signing of the declaration at the Summit of the Americas.

Day 91: April 20 — Mr. Obama visits the CIA to boost confidence after the release of memos citing CIA interrogation methods and calls on his Cabinet to slice \$100 million from their agencies' budgets within 90 days.

Day 92: April 21 — Mr. Obama meets with King Abdullah II of Jordan and leaves the door open for prosecution of federal lawyers who wrote harsh-interrogation memos during the Bush administration.

Day 93: April 22 — Mr. Obama travels to Iowa to visit a wind-energy plant and celebrate Earth Day.

Day 94: April 23 — Mr. Obama attends a Holocaust Days of Remembrance ceremony at the U.S. Capitol. He says he will not support the creation of an independent commission to investigate the Bush administration's harsh-interrogation techniques.

Day 95: April 24 — Mr. Obama renews his call for the government to stop backing private loans to college students and instead offer direct financial aid to young people.

Day 96: April 25 — Mr. Obama uses his radio address to announce a plan for federal workers to propose ways to improve their agencies' and departments' budgets.

Day 98: April 27 — Mr. Obama speaks at the National Academy of Sciences, promising a new era for science.

Day 100: April 29 — Mr. Obama is scheduled to hold his third prime-time news conference.

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WHITE HOUSE
Ronald Wilson Reagan and his wife, Nancy, celebrate the beginning of the 40th U.S. presidency on Jan. 20, 1981, during the inaugural parade.



ASSOCIATED PRESS
A Secret Service agent takes action after President Reagan and three other men were shot by John W. Hinckley Jr. on March 30, 1981 — the 70th day of Mr. Reagan's presidency.

ROOSEVELT

Day 1: March 4, 1933 — Franklin Delano Roosevelt is sworn in as the 32nd president of the United States, marking the last time an inauguration is held on March 4. In his inaugural address, Roosevelt says, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Day 6: March 9 — Congress convenes an emergency session and passes the Emergency Banking Act. Roosevelt meets with congressional leaders to outline an economic plan.

Day 9: March 12 — Roosevelt gives his first "fireside chat," talking about the banking crisis.

Day 28: March 31 — Congress creates the Civilian Conservation Corps, which hires young men to help in conservation efforts.

Day 35: April 7 — For the first time since Prohibition began in 1920, beer sales become legal, creating tax revenue. Prohibition is fully repealed in December 1933.

Day 47: April 19 — The United States abandons the gold standard.

Day 70: May 12 — Roosevelt signs the Emergency Farm Mortgage Act, providing for refinancing of farm mortgages; the Agricultural Adjustment Act, establishing farm subsidies; and the Federal Emergency Relief Act, providing \$500 million to relieve unemployment.

Day 76: May 18 — Roosevelt signs the Tennessee Valley Authority Act, providing for publicly owned hydroelectric power to rural areas.

Day 85: May 27 — Roosevelt signs the Federal Securities Act, establishing the Securities and Exchange Commission.



UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivers his inaugural address, marking the last time an inauguration was held in March.



UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
The Roosevelt administration creates the Civilian Conservation Corps, which hires young men to help in conservation efforts, in March 1933.



ASSOCIATED PRESS
Roosevelt introduces the first "fireside chat" to talk about the banking crisis in a 15-minute radio address. Roosevelt used the innovation to lay out plans on how to return banking conditions back to normal during his ninth day in office.



THE FIRST 100 DAYS

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Twitter'd OK with Obama
Online faithful give new president high marksBY CHRISTINA BELLANTONI
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Even though President Obama has offered up just one "tweet" for his 947,000 followers since taking office, the Twitter ruling is in — his first 100 days have been a resounding success.

A random sample of Twitter users engaged in political news mirrored a broader national trend of patience for the new president and a belief that the media exaggerate Mr. Obama's problems.

"Obama is our first modern multitasker president," user SteveBeste wrote on Twitter. "I give him an A for bringing a new sanity to domestic and foreign policy."

"Why oh why do these people seem to think Obama should have everything fixed in 4 months?" opined Jclipscomb0518.

The most common praise on the social-networking Web site came on the topic of restoring the U.S. image abroad.

"Levitated USA back to credible leader of the free world," user Altakocker wrote via Twitter, rating Mr. Obama with an "A+" and getting in under the microblogging service's 140-character limit.

The brevity of Twitter limits in-depth conversation about Mr. Obama's performance, but offers a gauge of to-the-point thoughts on the early benchmark of his presidency.



President Obama gets high marks in the Twitter realm as a "modern multitasker" who has delivered "intelligence, rationalism, courage" in his first 100 days in the White House.

"Been remarkable; shown restraint, leadership, intelligence, accomplishes goals, doesn't play tit for tat, gets an A," Misha1234 offered in a tweet.

"I give him a B," wrote Shaijinx. "Stim spending not big enough, love the tax cut, great

job overseas and with pirates, bad on spying."

TryDave said he got what he expected from Mr. Obama: "Intelligence, rationalism, courage."

Criticism focused on Mr. Obama's personnel mistakes — from his nominees such as former Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle dropping out owing to unpaid taxes or others, such as Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner, getting confirmed despite his problem with taxes.

Others said Mr. Obama's team did a poor job of vetting, said he has picked "inept" Cabinet members and has failed to communicate his policy for the bank crisis.

"I give Obama a B. It'd be an A but for serious and unexpected nominee drama," wrote Showmeets.

Charlesdthomas dinged Mr. Obama for what he considers "dissing USA to Europeans" and gave him low marks on the wars, national security and stimulus plan, but allowed an "A" grade for the president's handling of the Somali pirates standoff.

Comoannie said Mr. Obama is 80 percent right on priorities, but "too cozy with Wall St.," and LauriCroce gave the president an A-minus, saying the administration is "too concerned with politics" and re-election concerns.

Dgiant gave the president an A-minus for having "re-established strained foreign relations," adding, "He's doing what I voted for."

"A+ — Obama has had unprecedented challenges and has attacked them with reasoning & resolve," wrote Janeco.

Another found him "Refreshingly steady"; yet another said Mr. Obama is "swimming upstream on some issues."

Mediagadfly told her Twitter followers Mr. Obama deserves an "A+." Accomplished a lot domestically/internationally, gave left sufficient impetus to remain active/organized," but Sahyde1, who rates the president highly, suggested that "POTUS needs to utilize facebook and twitter more to get support for programs."

So while his "Tweeps" await the next 140-character bit of news from the president, Mr. Obama is keeping the American people engaged in other ways. He's invited them into the White House literally and figuratively and is asking them to knock on doors for his agenda.

The traditional presidential weekly radio address has evolved to a YouTube address, and the majority of Obama events are streamed at WhiteHouse.gov.

Obama supporters have been greeted with e-mails from his former campaign at least 17 times in his first 100 days in office.

He's also invited people to use the Internet to track his administration — soliciting questions for an "online" town hall and allowing families from across the country for the first time to access tickets to the annual White House Easter Egg roll.

The newly formed Organizing for America is using campaign tools to bring people together across the country for canvasses in support of the president's \$3.6 trillion budget plan.

Geneva Clark of Cincinnati, an active campaign volunteer, has remained involved by sending e-mails on behalf of the Obama agenda and talking to her friends, neighbors and co-workers.

Marie Engles of Springboro, Ohio, has called on her local politicians to ask them to support Mr. Obama's budget. She also has written her own network on unrelated matters, urging them to write letters to the New York Post about a cartoon she found offensive or to vote in online polls ranking the president's performance.

Some said they are tired of getting e-mail solicitations from the campaign apparatus, saying they want a break from fundraising since Mr. Obama won the election. Others have applauded the communication.

"The first thing that I believe Obama has done well in the first 100 days is capitalize on the young Americans who have been recruited into the political process by his campaign," said Jamie Vernon, who ran a precinct in Austin, Texas. "I was always just an observer of politics . . . after listening to his speech with 21,000 other Austinites, I was motivated to get involved."

THE NEW TERRORISTS:

(According to Obama's Department of Homeland Security)



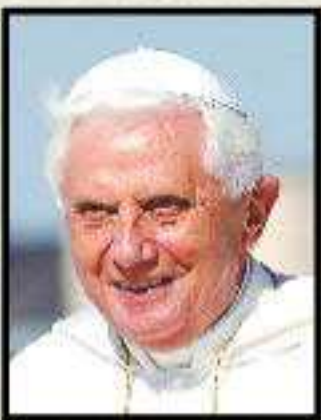
George Washington
(military veteran and gun owner)



Mother Teresa
(pro-life)



Ronald Reagan
(pro-life, and staunch advocate for less government),



The Pope
(supports life and traditional marriage)



if you are any of the following:

- u A Veteran
- u Support the Second Amendment and/or own a gun
- u Support Secure Borders
- u Pro-Life
- u Support Traditional Marriage
- u Believe in limited Government
- u Prefer American Sovereignty to Global Government

Political Profiling of Conservatives

While the Department of Homeland Security admits they have "no specific information" of any violent activity or plans of any violence, in a "Rightwing Extremism" report, DHS Secretary, Janet Napolitano, has labeled law-abiding citizens as "right wing extremists" and potential "terrorists" anyway and has instructed state and local law enforcement to monitor, investigate and "report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to DHS and the FBI."

The New Terrorists

Among the groups being targeted as "terrorists," according to the report, are "military veterans" who return home (from fighting terrorists), those who "reject federal authority in favor of state or local authority," and "groups and individuals that are dedicated to a single issue such as opposition to abortion or immigration."

Also on the new terrorist watch list are those who purchase legal firearms and ammunition and oppose laws that restrict the Second Amendment. Included as "potential terrorists" are those who believe in "end times" prophecies, and those with "fear and paranoia" of an impending economic collapse.

Monitor and Investigate

In addition, law enforcement agencies are instructed to monitor and investigate citizens who do not embrace globalism, a "New World Order," and those concerned about "a world government that would usurp the sovereignty of the United States and its Constitution."

"Most Dangerous"

Ignoring the real threats to our security from known Islamic jihad terrorist cells currently training terrorists on American soil, DHS, instead, has declared law-abiding citizens who express their First Amendment Rights as "the most dangerous domestic terrorism threat in the United States" and has initiated domestic spying on them.

We, the law-abiding Citizens of America, demand:

1. **The Resignation or Removal of DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano** for her partisan political profiling of veterans and conservatives and her abuse of power.
2. **An apology from President Barack Obama** to ALL Americans for his administration's call for domestic spying.
3. **The Immediate Retraction of the "Rightwing Extremism" report** for labeling law-abiding citizens as "terrorists" because of their political views.

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American Decency Association
Center for Security Policy
Eagle Forum of Alabama
Legacy Church of Albuquerque, NM
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Traditional Values Coalition

Religious Freedom Coalition
United States Justice Foundation
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Operation Rescue
Take Back Our Country
Americans for Truth

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www.NoPoliticalProfiling.com



THE FIRST 100 DAYS

Foreign policy changes direction

By NICHOLAS KRALEV
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Obama has dramatically shifted the tone of U.S. foreign policy in his first 100 days in office, apologizing for what he views as past misdeeds and reaching out to longtime adversaries.

So far, there are few concrete achievements, and critics say the president has been too quick to embrace foes such as Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. Others say the U.S. image abroad has improved significantly and established a basis for future progress.

Already it is clear that Mr. Obama's foreign-policy agenda is ambitious and his worldview very different from that of his predecessor.

If the defining phrase of former President George W. Bush was, "If you are not with us, you are against us," Mr. Obama has made it clear that, in his eyes, the United States has no permanent enemies, that most conflicts have shades of gray and that other countries, like the U.S., have the right to act in their own interests.

The question now is whether countries such as Iran, North Korea, Cuba and Venezuela will reciprocate his overtures and change policies that have hurt the United States and its allies.

"President Obama has made an impressive start in changing America's image and the goals and concepts that shape the operational realities of its national security strategy," said Anthony H. Cordesman, a longtime foreign policy and military expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"He also took a series of actions that demonstrated that he was far more of a pragmatist and realist than President Bush, far less ideological, and far more committed to proactive diplomacy," Mr. Cordesman said. "While any lasting change depends on his successes in the years that follow, a range of polls show that President Obama was able to reverse much of America's lost prestige and popularity in a matter of months."

Mr. Cordesman pointed out, however, that "changes in substance are a different issue," and they are not likely to take place at least until a year into Mr. Obama's tenure, when he "can present his first true budget to Congress."

Meeting Chavez

Mr. Obama has sparked some controversy among U.S. conservatives by talking publicly about past U.S. mistakes on overseas trips. He has also gone out of his way to appear sensitive to other cultures and traditions.

Freedom and democracy — whose promotion was a cornerstone of Mr. Bush's policies — have not been a priority, and Mr. Obama has hardly mentioned either, except in reference to Cuba. Mr. Obama, who recently lifted restrictions on Cuban Americans traveling to Cuba and sending money there, indicated that the Cuban government would have to do something on the democracy and human rights front before the U.S. would lift the trade embargo in place for more than half a century.

During the recent Summit of the Americas in Trinidad, Mr. Obama acknowledged the "broad applicability" of freedom and democracy, but also said that "other countries have different cultures, different perspectives, and are coming out of different histories."

"If we are practicing what we preach, and if we occasionally confess to having strayed from our values and our ideals, that strengthens our hand — that allows us to speak with greater moral force and clarity around these issues," he said.

At that summit, Mr. Obama had friendly exchanges with — and shook hands with — Mr. Chavez, who has had a strained relationship with Washington and called Mr. Bush "the devil" at the United Nations in 2007.

Some Republicans responded with anger.

"It sends a terrible signal to all of Latin America and a terrible signal about how the new administration regards dictators," former House Speaker Newt Gingrich told Fox News. "I don't think there is any downside to talking to him, but I think being friends, taking a picture that clearly looks like they are buddies, hurts in all of Latin America."

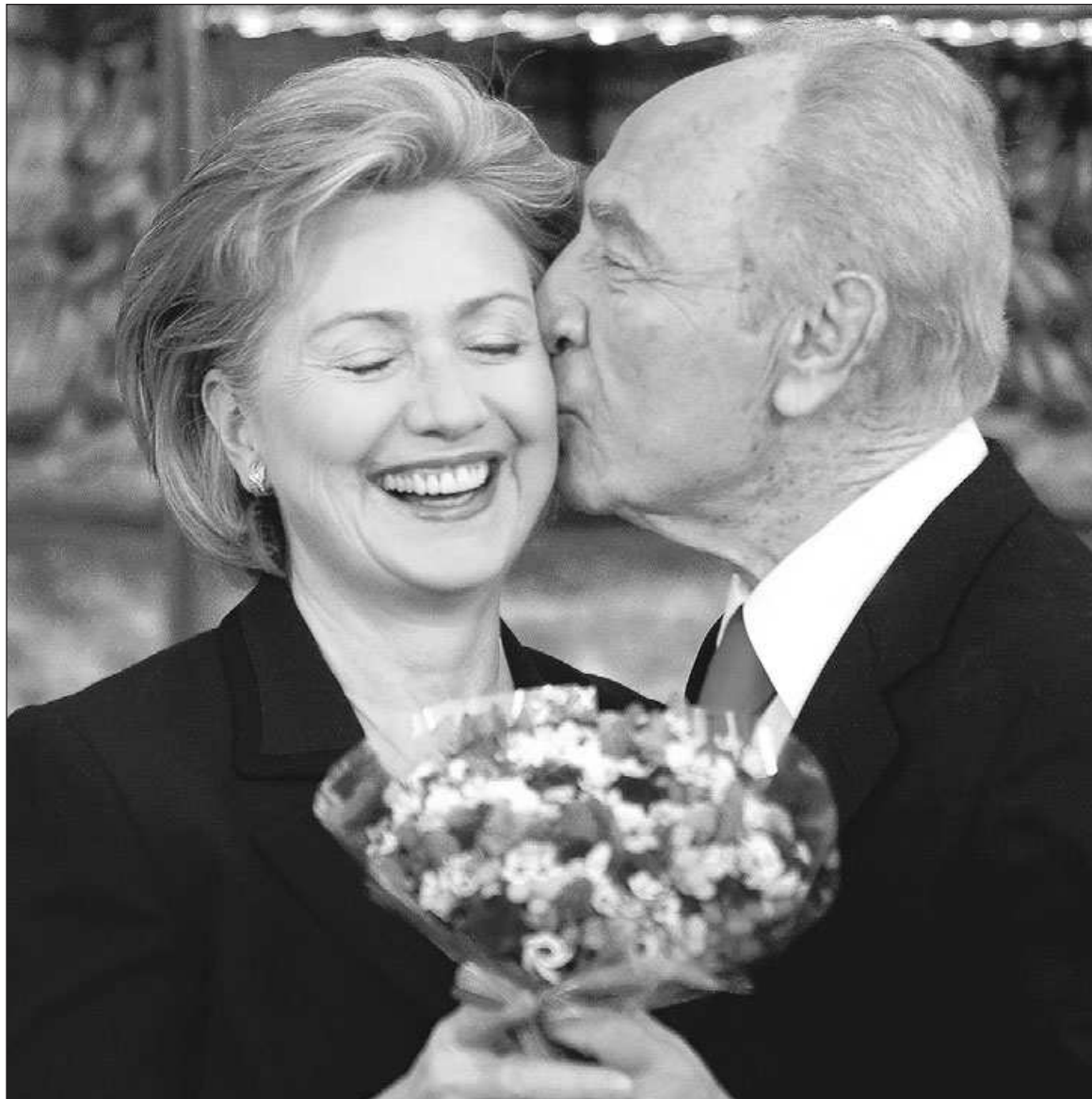
Mr. Obama, noting how reporters and photographers shadowed Mr. Chavez, said shaking hands and exchanging polite comments did not mean that he agrees with the Venezuelan's policies.

"It means that, where there is resistance to a particular set of policies that we are pursuing, that resistance may turn out just to be based on old preconceptions or ideological dogmas that, when they are cleared away, it turns out that we can actually solve a problem," Mr. Obama said.

Former Secretary of State James



President Obama poses for photos at the Group of 20 summit in London in April with (from left) Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, Saudi King Abdullah, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, Chinese President Hu Jintao and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.



Israeli President Shimon Peres greets Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton during her visit to Jerusalem in March. Mrs. Clinton has taken the lead on most foreign-policy matters in the Obama administration.

A. Baker III said the U.S. "ought not to be afraid to talk to people," and if adversaries fail to respond to Washington's overtures, the world will be asking "Who's at fault here?" which will place the burden on those countries.

Iran, N. Korea?

Iran has been sending mixed signals about meeting with the U.S. since the Obama administration dropped a previous U.S. condition that Tehran suspend enriching uranium. North Korea has shot off a missile, expelled arms inspectors and threatened to restart its nuclear reactor.

Elliott Abrams, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and the top Middle East expert in the Bush White House, said the Obama administration is "making a mistake" by not saying that "all op-

tions are on the table" in its public statements on Iran. That is a phrase often used by presidents and implies that the use of force should not be ruled out.

"They are obviously going to try to negotiate a deal with the regime, and will use the threat of sanctions as a lever," Mr. Abrams said. "It isn't enough. The threat of force should always be in the background."

Mr. Obama, in contrast to his predecessor, has sought to signal that he is not going to promote the overthrow of the Iranian government. He and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton refer to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the country's official name, offering implicit recognition of its legitimacy.

While Iran appears to be making an effort to understand the administration's intentions and is still weighing its options, North Korea has misread Washington's overtures

for direct talks as a sign of weakness, diplomats and analysts say.

"President Obama has managed the North Korea issue very well, [but] Pyongyang has played things terribly — miscalculation, misperception and internal politics are driving [North Korean] policy in a dangerous and self-destructive direction," said Evans Revere, president of the Korea Society in New York and a former U.S. diplomat with extensive experience in Northeast Asia.

He noted that the reasons for North Korea's actions most likely have to do with succession. Leader Kim Jong-il reportedly suffered a stroke last summer, and recent television footage showed him much thinner and frailer than he used to be.

"The next move is Pyongyang's," Mr. Revere said. "If the North's recent rhetoric is any guide, we are in for a very difficult period — military incidents, more missile launches, and even another nuclear weapons test cannot be ruled out, even if these would further isolate North Korea. The patience and solidarity of the United States and its allies and partners will be tested in the months ahead."

Relations with Russia look more promising.

During his first overseas trip, Mr. Obama met with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on the sidelines of the summit of the Group of 20 largest economies in London. Both the U.S. and Russia have repeatedly emphasized their desire to "reset" their relations, after serious tensions in the last few years. They are about to begin negotiations on an accord to replace a soon-expiring treaty to reduce strategic nuclear weapons.

Mr. Obama also appears on track to fulfill promises to withdraw from Iraq by 2011, although a recent uptick in violence has raised concerns that the timetable

may change.

"It has been impressive to see the administration move quickly to embed U.S. forces with both the Kurdish and federal Iraqi forces in Kirkuk, preventing a clash between those forces in March," said Michael Knights, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "This willingness to 'surge' locally showed that the administration was prepared to invest ongoing effort to stabilize a part of Iraq that was backsliding."

Afghanistan, Pakistan

Perhaps Mr. Obama's most daunting task is making progress in the war in Afghanistan while keeping Pakistan from collapse. He has called Afghanistan and Pakistan part of the same challenge of fighting al Qaeda and the Taliban and backed a Senate bill co-sponsored by Sens. John Kerry, Massachusetts Democrat, and Richard G. Lugar, Indiana Republican, to authorize \$1.5 billion a year for Pakistan over the next five years.

"He was forced to rush his decisions before all of the necessary planning and budgeting could be completed, given that the war had reached a crisis point, and was effectively being lost at the ideological and political level," Mr. Cordesman said. "Pakistan was acting as a sanctuary for jihadist movements, and action had to be taken immediately to deal with the 2009 [election] campaign season in Afghanistan and Pakistan."

Mr. Obama sent an additional 17,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan and appointed Richard C. Holbrooke, an accomplished diplomat often called a "bulldozer," as his special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. That appointment was made on Mr. Obama's third day in office, along with the naming former Senate Majority Leader George J. Mitchell as special envoy for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. A spate of other envoys have also been named to deal with issues ranging from climate change to Eurasian energy.

Mr. Mitchell's task has been complicated by the election of right-wing politician Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's prime minister.

"The administration has yet to define a policy on Israeli-Palestinian issues, which is understandable," Mr. Abrams said. "Israel's new government is being given a chance to get organized and define its own policies. This may reflect a pragmatic approach by the administration, which is a very good sign. There are efforts to draw it into a confrontation with Netanyahu over settlement policy, but I hope the administration will be too smart for that."

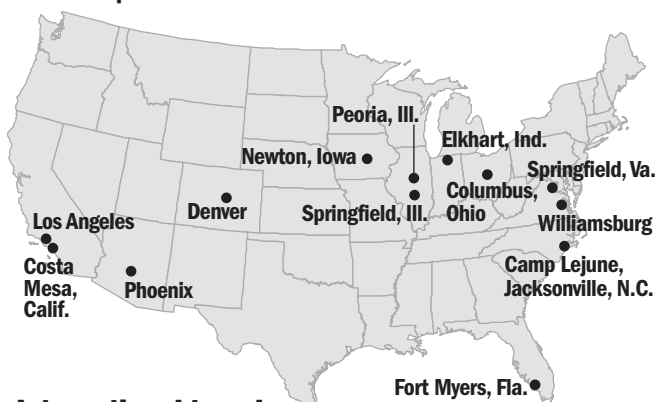
During her first visit to the Middle East, Mrs. Clinton publicly disagreed with Mr. Netanyahu's repeated statements that he would not be pursuing Palestinian statehood. She insisted that the administration will not change its mind.

Because Mr. Obama has been deeply engaged in efforts to deal with the global recession, Mrs. Clinton has taken the lead on most foreign-policy matters. Her first overseas trip — to Asia — garnered media coverage around the world. She has also impressed her foreign colleagues with her knowledge and understanding of issues she had not dealt with in depth previously.

"She has done a very good job, but the test will be whether she can be seamless with the president," said Mr. Baker, whose success was in part attributed to his closeness to President George H.W. Bush. "As secretary of state, you can't succeed if foreign leaders perceive any daylight between you and the president."

ON THE ROAD

All of the president's travels:



International travel:

- Canada
- England
- France
- Germany
- Czech Republic
- Turkey
- Iraq
- Mexico
- Trinidad and Tobago

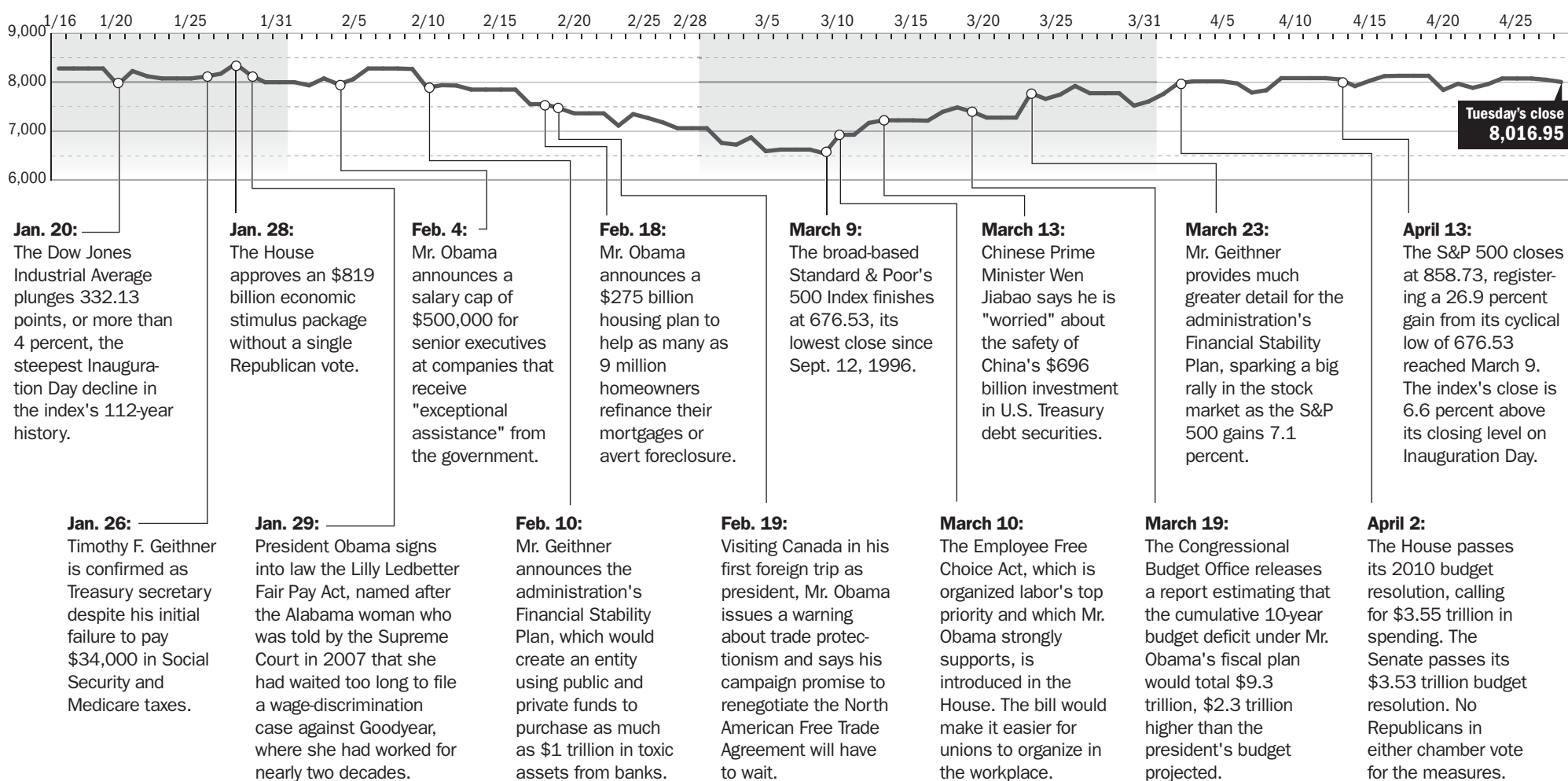
Sources: The Washington Times, White House releases and RealClearPolitics.com



THE FIRST 100 DAYS

CHARTING AN ECONOMIC RESPONSE

How the Dow Jones Industrial Average fared at various points during President Obama's first 100 days in office.



Source: The Washington Times, Treasury Department, White House

Action swift, but outcome uncertain

By PATRICE HILL

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Only once in a generation does a new president confront a major economic crisis like the one President Obama faced when he took office.

And his response has been proportionate to the problem: record increases in spending aimed at spurring growth in his \$787 billion stimulus bill and a \$3.5 trillion budget plan, coupled with middle-class tax cuts and unprecedented efforts to resuscitate banks and failed credit markets.

Polls show most Americans hope the plans will succeed and give the president credit for trying, but many also are worried about the huge pileup of debt. Economists say the jury is still out on whether the response will succeed at reversing the worst economic downturn since World War II.

The financial markets swung wildly through Mr. Obama's first 100 days, reacting sharply to his spate of proposals and to investors' waxing and waning hopes for an economic recovery. Mr. Obama was greeted rudely on Inauguration Day with the biggest-ever drop in the Dow Jones Industrial Average for a new president, but then enjoyed a comeback in the Dow when investors applauded his bank-rescue plans two months later.

The "flurry of legislative activity" and other initiatives coming so quickly out of the White House buffeted the markets because of the unknown and potentially large consequences for the economy, said Jeffrey Kleintop, chief market strategist at LPL Financial. "The last time a president was inaugurated with similarly aggressive and wide-ranging stimulus [and bank rescue] plans — it was March 1933," the beginning of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 12 years in office.

A record number of bills were passed in Roosevelt's first 100 days, and the Depression-era president's move to address an even more severe banking crisis in the 1930s by offering a first-ever federal guarantee on bank deposits helped spur an 80 percent surge in the stock market, Mr. Kleintop noted.

"It's easy to get numb to all of this, to forget how much has happened so fast," said Gerald Seib, assistant managing editor of the Wall Street Journal, comparing the first 100 days of the Obama presidency with the sweeping change brought by Ronald Reagan when he took office in 1981.

"It feels like Reagan on steroids," Mr. Seib said, noting that the Republican president, responding to an economic crisis of comparable severity, did not secure passage of his signature tax cuts until August of his first year in office.

Mr. Obama secured enactment of his stimulus bill during his first month in office and later offered plans to help millions of homeowners facing foreclosures and to remedy a multitrillion-dollar problem with souring loans and losses at banks. Then, he moved to engineer the first-ever federal restructuring of automakers General Motors and Chrysler along with the broader auto industry, the backbone of the U.S. manufacturing sector.

The administration's potentially radical idea of forcing GM and Chrysler into a quick, government-sponsored bankruptcy — after firing GM's longtime chief executive, Richard Wagoner, last month — by itself would be a monumental step

for any new president. Yet it seems like "almost a footnote" in light of the other big economic measures Mr. Obama has pushed through in his first few weeks in office, Mr. Seib said in a presentation to the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

There is a danger that Mr. Obama may be trying to do too much at once — or at least more than the public and Congress can digest at one time — the Wall Street Journal editor said. While Americans support what he's doing right now, by this fall "fatigue" may set in.

In particular, Mr. Seib is concerned that "the political will to finish the economic rescue will fizzle" and endanger Mr. Obama's chance of securing the additional funding he is likely to need by this fall to finish cleaning up the toxic-loan problem at banks.

"A populist tiger" has been set loose against the bank rescue, spawned by rage against the excessive pay and perks of Wall Street executives, which threatens to thwart the administration's efforts, he said.

Misgivings about Mr. Obama's far-reaching agenda have rattled Wall Street markets from time to time, starting with a whopping 332-point drop in the Dow the day he took office, and punctuated by a 384-point drop in the Dow after his first attempt to address the banking crisis fell flat in early February.

Weeks of uncertainty racked the markets, which did not decidedly improve until the end of March, when the Treasury unveiled a more detailed plan to clean up banks' toxic-loan problems, sparking a nearly 500-point surge in the Dow.

The stock market showed spurts of enthusiasm in January as Mr. Obama made plans for a giant stimulus bill. The largest such measure ever passed by Congress, the bill promised to restore or generate 3 million to 4 million jobs through a variety of funding for traditional road and bridge projects, schools, health care, "green" energy and technology programs and middle-class tax cuts.

But a more sober mood set in as economists warned that the tax cuts would dribble out slowly, large parts of the bill would only prop up spending by states and unemployed workers that otherwise would be lost to the recession, and much of the new spending would not be seen for months because of slow bureaucracies. Economists also estimated the plan would restore only 1 million to 2 million jobs — far less than the 5.3 million already lost to the recession.

With help still months away, the economy continued in free fall during the first four months of the year. Economists estimate it contracted at a 5 percent rate in the first quarter — only a smidgen better than the 6.3 percent drop in output seen in the final quarter of 2008.

Employers slashed jobs by nearly 600,000 a month in a blood-letting not seen in most Americans' lifetimes. The dismal news forced Mr. Obama repeatedly to warn that 2009 would be largely a lost year for the economy, and a lasting recovery might not be seen until next year.

In a recent speech at Georgetown University, Mr. Obama emphasized that his goal is not just to spur growth immediately in the economy, but rather to foster long-term changes that will lay a foundation for more lasting gains by transforming the economy into a more productive one that relies less on



President Obama, with Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner, in April hosts a roundtable discussion at the White House on the impact of historically low interest rates. The jury is still out on whether Mr. Obama's economic-policy prescriptions will cure an ailing economy.

debt and speculation.

While Mr. Obama's stimulus program passed Congress quickly, his efforts to resuscitate the banking and credit markets were slowed in large part by fierce opposition to the bank-bailout program that began under the Bush administration. Forced to accept limited resources of less than \$300 billion left in the bailout fund to address a multitrillion-dollar problem, the Treasury Department took weeks to develop a complicated yet sophisticated program seeking to draw in private resources to help restore the health of banks and credit markets.

After fits and starts, the plan announced in late March to clean up \$1 trillion of souring loan assets on banks' books through public-private investment funds helped provoke a modicum of optimism about troubled banking giants like Citicorp and Bank of America. The more upbeat mood also was fed by the record profits the banks reported during the first quarter, owing largely to a mortgage-refinancing boom and the help they got from the Treasury and Federal Reserve.

Beyond the banking and stimulus programs, Mr. Kleintop gives high marks to Mr. Obama's efforts to beef up the resources of the International Monetary Fund to address the world financial crisis. The crisis that began in the United States with burgeoning defaults in subprime mortgages in 2007 by the time Mr. Obama took office had spread to every corner of the world. It fell on him not only to address the problems at home, but to try to lead efforts for an international response to the crisis.

But Mr. Obama has remained resolutely focused on trying to help Americans alarmed and stricken by the economic collapse. One of his first priorities was to use the bank-bailout fund to offer a \$50 billion program to try to reduce home-loan defaults and foreclosures by promoting modifications of unaffordable loans by banks. Mr. Kleintop said the foreclosure program has the potential to help arrest a root economic problem: the free fall in the housing market, which has steadily added to a mountain of bad loans already weighing on banks and credit markets.

Economists and businessmen also give Mr. Obama credit for bringing on a top-caliber economic team led by veterans from previous administrations who have won the trust and confidence of financial markets. Those economic heavyweights include former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker as economic adviser, former Treasury Secretary Lawrence H. Summers to

head the National Economic Council, and former New York Fed bank president Timothy F. Geithner to be Treasury secretary.

While Mr. Geithner in particular has been targeted by critics for his role as custodian of the bank-bailout program, economists and businessmen say the roster of familiar faces associated with more prosperous economic times in the 1980s and 1990s has been reassuring to markets amid the crisis.

At the same time, investors remain wary that the economy could be hurt by the potential for some destructive proposals touted by administration allies in the Democratic-led Congress, such as a "Buy America" provision added to the stimulus bill that marked a shift toward trade protectionism, Mr. Kleintop said.

Economists worry about a repeat of one of the biggest mistakes made during the Great Depression, when a move by Congress to protect domestic manufacturers by raising tariffs on imported goods led to tit-for-tat moves by other nations and worsened the global economic free fall.

Mr. Obama, who advocated more restrictive trade policies during his campaign, nevertheless relieved financial markets by emerging more recently as a free-trade defender. He moved to water down the "Buy America" provision to ensure it didn't violate free-trade agreements the U.S. has signed, and so far also has fended off calls for retaliatory measures against China for artificially manipulating its currency to gain an advantage in trade.

Still, the "Buy America" incident served to illustrate "the uncertainty and potential for negative consequences as a result of new policy actions," and that may weigh on the markets for some time, Mr. Kleintop said.

While most of the book on Mr. Obama's presidency remains to be written, Michael Kazin, history professor at Georgetown University, said the flurry of major actions addressing the economic crisis in the first days of the new administration shows that Mr. Obama has the potential to be a "transformational" president like Mr. Reagan, FDR and even Abraham Lincoln.

"In each case, these were presidents who followed a president who was perceived widely to have been inept and self-defeating, the leader of a coalition in decline," he said. "In each case, the president did move quickly. . . . They had to move quickly. They were elected because people wanted change."

While Mr. Obama exudes confidence and clearly aims to make a

mark with his ambitious agenda, whether he and his economic program succeed depends on "how much patience Americans have" to give the programs time to work, among other factors, Mr. Kazin said.

Many people compare Mr. Obama to Roosevelt, but he is unlike the Depression-era president in important ways, the history professor said. While Roosevelt was able to enact sweeping changes without much regard for what the rest of the world was doing because the economy in the 1930s was not as globalized, Mr. Obama does not have that luxury in today's far more interconnected world economy.

"You can't solve economic problems only in the United States today. It's impossible. People know that," Mr. Kazin said. "If China pulled all of its money out [of U.S. bonds], we'd be in a lot more trouble. [Mr. Obama] can't do it himself," and he has acknowledged as much in his early trips to engage allies in Canada, Europe, the Middle East and South America, and in dispatching Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to China.

Mr. Obama has gone out of his way to acknowledge the growing importance and influence of other power centers in the world, portraying his role — as leader of the largest economy and greatest military power — as one of cooperating and encouraging consensus among nations, rather than dictating terms to the rest of the world.

In the 21st century, "He in some ways is president of the world, but not really," said Mr. Kazin. "There's still a lot of sovereignty out there" that will make the task of coordinating global economic policies difficult.

One advantage Mr. Obama has is his mission to revive the economy should be easier than Roosevelt's because he faces a less daunting economic challenge, Mr. Kazin said. Roosevelt was president at a time when one in four Americans were out of work, compared with less than one in 10 today, while many millions more were impoverished, hungry and homeless.

"Obama needs something besides getting the economy on a better footing," Mr. Kazin said, suggesting that reform of the health care system will be "essential" to make a mark. "Every transformational president has a program he can point to: Roosevelt had Social Security, [President Lyndon] Johnson had anti-poverty and voting rights programs; Reagan had tax cuts and winning the Cold War."

While Mr. Obama has hopes of turning the United States into a "green" and more just economy that spreads benefits to everyone and not just the rich, some critics on the right accuse him of being a socialist whose goal is to eliminate free markets and redistribute wealth.

They are wrong, Mr. Seib said. "We're talking about big government; we're talking about activism and a lot more spending, but we're not talking about socialism," he said. The best evidence that Mr. Obama is not planning a government takeover of the economy, Mr. Seib said, is his rejection of calls to nationalize founding banks like Citigroup and Bank of America when they sought federal rescues earlier this year. Also, he has shown a preference for maintaining today's hybrid system of government-private health care rather than nationalizing health care as favored by many liberal Democrats in Congress.



THE FIRST 100 DAYS

Obamas making the District home

By MOLLY NEVOLA
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Perhaps it's their interaction with local schoolchildren — or their family outings to popular restaurants. Maybe it's his support for D.C. congressional voting rights, or his casual games of hoops at a city recreation center.

The reasons vary, depending on who is doing the surmising, but one thing is clear: The District has embraced the Obamas, in part because the Obamas have embraced the District.

"They are supporting our city, and our city is supporting them. It is fantastic for Washington," says Todd Gray, executive chef and co-owner of the upscale Northwest restaurant Equinox, where the first family celebrated first lady Michelle Obama's 45th birthday in January.

"I think 'inspiration' is a key word for the Obamas because they are inspiring so many people — inspiring confidence. Everyone is excited about what they are doing for the city," Mr. Gray says. "People are excited about the energy they've brought here."

Equinox isn't the only place about town where the Obamas have been seen.

Declaring his family "neighborhood people" at January's first-ever Neighborhood Inaugural Ball, President Obama indicated his plans to integrate himself and his family into the D.C. community.

As president-elect, Mr. Obama played basketball with D.C. Mayor Adrian M. Fenty at an indoor basketball court at Marie Reed Community Learning Center on Champlain Street in Northwest. Mr. Obama's local credibility soared after his high-profile visit to Ben's Chili Bowl on U Street, where he ordered the popular half-smoke.

In February, the president watched the Washington Wizards from courtside seats at the Verizon Center. He cheered for his hometown Chicago Bulls, but D.C. fans apparently forgave him. After all, the Wizards won — 133 to 90.

City residents also looked the other way in January, when Mr. Obama blithely suggested that the District was filled with winter wimps for closing schools after a storm dumped snow and ice on streets and sidewalks.

"We're going to have to try to apply some flinty Chicago toughness to this town," Mr. Obama said. But outrage over the faux pas disappeared faster than the snow itself.

The administration also has reached out to the city's social scene, inviting top editors of three of Washington's local luxury-lifestyle magazines — Capitol File, DC magazine and Washington Life — to a meeting to discuss how they could engage the community and build grass-roots support for some of Mr. Obama's programs.

Mr. Obama made a special effort to reach out to D.C. public school students in late March, when he created an internship opportunity — the D.C. Scholars Program — for high schoolers to learn about public service while working in White House offices for the summer.

On the policy side, the president has expressed support for the D.C. Voting Rights Act, which the Senate passed in February. He had co-sponsored a similar measure in 2007 when he was still an Illinois senator.

In an interview with The Washington Post, Mr. Obama described himself as a "strong proponent" of the District receiving a representative vote in Congress.

The bill would permanently expand the number of House members from 435 to 437 by giving the heavily Democratic District its first-ever voting representative and adding a counterbalancing representative to Republican-leaning Utah's delegation until after the 2010 census, when it would be re-assigned based on census results. The D.C. delegate position, currently held by Eleanor Holmes Norton, a Democrat, would be eliminated. The bill is on hold.

"The president is not only a supporter of the city's voting rights efforts, but is also vocal about his commitment to ensuring District of Columbia representation in Congress," Mr. Fenty said. "The president has given the city his support and commitment, and I am confident his administration will work as fast as humanly possible to achieve this goal."

Mrs. Obama also has made it a point to reach out to schools in the area and engage herself in the community.

In February, she told a teenager at Mary's Center, a health care clinic in Adams Morgan, that the District is now her family's community, something that people must get to know in order to actively be a part of it.

"Our job is really to just share our stories, to make these kids understand that where we stand today is not an impossibility by any stretch of the imagination,"



President-elect Obama orders lunch in January at Ben's Chili Bowl on U Street in Northwest, selecting the popular half-smoke. The high-profile visit at the D.C. landmark with Mayor Adrian M. Fenty (center) was just one of the ways he set out to boost his local credibility in the District.



Mr. Obama sits with Nick Aiello, 5, at their court-side seats as the Washington Wizards play the Chicago Bulls at the Verizon Center in February. The former Illinois senator cheered for his hometown team, but D.C. fans forgave him.

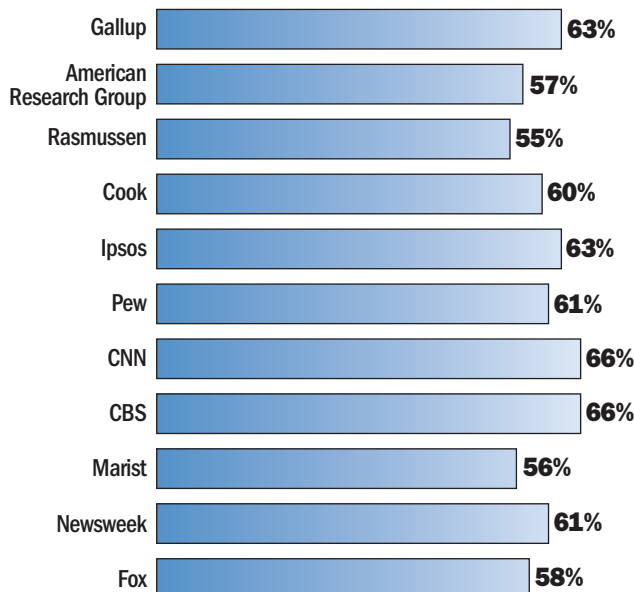


GETTY IMAGES

First lady Michelle Obama breaks ground on the White House garden on the South Lawn in March. Students from Bancroft Elementary in Northwest were invited to join in the project.

POPULARITY POLL

President Obama remained at the top of public opinion polls taken in April.



Sources: The Washington Times, White House releases and RealClearPolitics.com

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

ute to Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, Massachusetts Democrat.

In addition to Equinox, the Obamas have dined at Georgia Brown's and Bobby Van's Steakhouse, both in Northwest. They also grabbed a quick bite at a Washington staple, Five Guys.

D.C. resident Mike Sweeney said the vibe in the city has significantly changed owing to the Obamas' involvement in the community.

"Everyone is now molded together as one, and there is a lot more positivity," he said. "I never thought I'd see this day come, not just because of race, but because of the unity they bring."

Before moving to the District, Mr. Obama said he would be shopping around for a church to attend in Washington and would choose one in an effort not to be disruptive to the city.

While the Obamas have not necessarily settled on a particular church, they attended services at the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church on the Sunday before his inauguration and more recently attended St. John's Church across from Lafayette Park on Easter.

Capitol Hill resident Emily White, 23, attended an early service at St. John's that day and caught a glimpse of the president, who came in for the 11 a.m. service.

"It was exciting to see the Obama family out in their community connecting to the people. I think it really shows he is a people's president," she said.

Another resident, Bruce Thomas, said that he is very impressed with what the first family has done related to their integration into city affairs.

"You can see among the crowds the unity. People are just more involved in politics," he said. Mr. Thomas was among those who visited Madame Tussauds wax museum in Northwest this month to see the unveiling of a Michelle Obama figure. The first lady's figure now stands beside a wax rendering of Mr. Obama, which has stood in the gallery since February 2008.

According to tourism corporation Destination D.C., there has been an upsurge in interest and excitement in the city versus other markets across the country.

One factor that the organization can track on a steady basis is hotel performance.

Destination D.C.'s director of communications, Rebecca Pawlowski, said that for the month of March and the beginning of April, hotel occupancy locally held steady from where it was last year, while hotel occupancy nationwide has declined.

"It's the same sense of energy and excitement that buoyed us during the inauguration period, and it has helped D.C. do relatively well," she said.

Ms. Pawlowski said the Obama family has encouraged the company to advertise summer promotions with strong family angles, including Destination D.C.'s new Obama family itinerary, which offers groups an opportunity to experience the city's hot spots, Obama-style.

"We have a young first family that is plugged into a city. They're from an urban background and used to going out to restaurants and being involved in community issues, so they are bringing that here," Ms. Pawlowski said.

The suggested tour features visits to Equinox and Georgia Brown's, where Mrs. Obama lunched with Mr. Fenty and Jill Biden, wife of Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr.

It recommends a date night at the Kennedy Center and an exploration of historic U Street, with a stop at Ben's Chili Bowl, of course.

the first lady said while hosting 200 students for a Black History Month celebration.

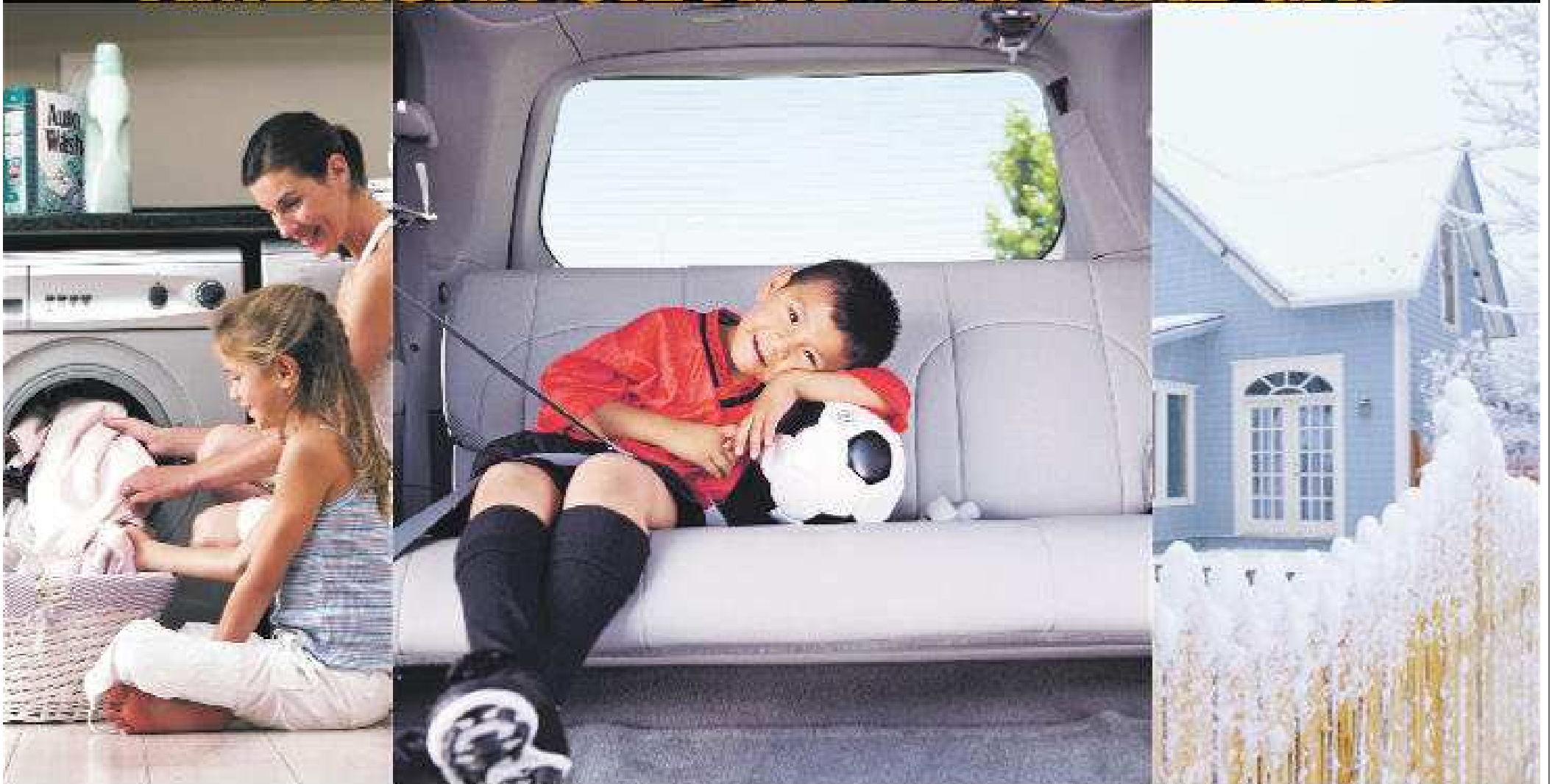
Mrs. Obama visited Anacostia Senior High School in Southeast in March to express her concern about education in the area and to encourage struggling students in D.C.'s school system, often described as the highest-spending, worst-performing system in the nation.

That same week she hosted a groundbreaking of the White House Kitchen Garden on the South Lawn, where elementary students helped prepare the grounds for planting and harvesting.

Family outings have been common as well. The Obamas have visited the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts twice — once to enjoy the Alvin Ailey dance troupe and once for a musical trib-



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