

The Insurgent President

President Obama's strike decision and our Navy Seals execution of a bold and insurgent raid, killing and capturing Osama Bin Laden, jolted our patriotic spirit. Most importantly, it demonstrated how the President calibrated the policy choices and then launched the strike into the heart of Pakistan. It was an insurgent strategy—a winning strategy for the American people.

An incumbent—big, bureaucratic, cautious—would have sent a big bomb into Abbottabad. President Obama thought, planned and acted as an insurgent—building on four years of intelligence-gathering and reviewing strategic choices. He chose a course with risk but reward.



Bin Laden's demise will not reelect President Barack Obama. Governing as an insurgent will—and that means playing offense, rising above petty politics, focusing on strategic choices and a single, disciplined mission. It is the only way to earn four more years in the White House.

The challenge is three-fold: First, U.S.-Pakistan relations must be re-set. The U.S. must no longer provide over \$3 billion of foreign aid to a nation enabling the Taliban, harboring terrorists and pretending to ignore 15-foot barbed wire fences. The question for President Zardari is: Are you with us or not?

Second, the larger Middle East unrest is the next core challenge for America. The true test of national security leadership will be managing our policies toward Libya, Yemen and Syria. And here it is time to encourage democratization strategically, incrementally and patiently.

Third, there is the broader leadership challenge. President Obama will see a short-term boost in the polls. But the Administration should remember that just last week, 70 percent of Americans said the nation is on the “wrong track.” And 54 percent said their number one issue is the economy....compared to only 4 percent who listed the war on terrorism.

To lead greatly, President Obama must continue to lead like an insurgent! What does this mean? It means leading the dialogue about changing politics as usual, uniting a fractured political system, making progress against debt, re-shaping our budget and creating jobs. It means leading the dialogue on the budget, debt, Medicare and energy. The next mission is the economy.

An Obama second term? It will take leading the country as an insurgent with great strategy and courage. Doing this will demonstrate to the American people the next President of the United States deserves to be Barack Obama.

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