



# Hope And Change Revisited

*On This Day In 2007, Obama First Announced His Bid For Presidency*

**OBAMA'S CALLS FOR HOPE AND CHANGE ARE A DISTANT MEMORY**

*Candidate Obama Promised An Era Of New Leadership In Washington*

**Candidate Obama, Announcing His Bid For Presidency In 2007: "I Know I Haven't Spent A Lot Of Time Learning The Ways Of Washington. But I've Been There Long Enough To Know That The Ways Of Washington Must Change."** (Then-Candidate Barack Obama, [Remarks Announcing Candidacy For President](#), Springfield, IL, 2/10/07)

- **Obama Bemoaned The "Failure Of Leadership, The Smallness Of Our Politics – The Ease With Which We're Distracted By The Petty And Trivial."** OBAMA: "What's stopped us from meeting these challenges is not the absence of sound policies and sensible plans. What's stopped us is the failure of leadership, the smallness of our politics – the ease with which we're distracted by the petty and trivial, our chronic avoidance of tough decisions, our preference for scoring cheap political points instead of rolling up our sleeves and building a working consensus to tackle big problems." (Then-Candidate Barack Obama, [Remarks Announcing Candidacy For President](#), Springfield, IL, 2/10/07)

**President-Elect Obama, 2008: "Change Has Come To America."** OBAMA: "It's been a long time coming, but tonight, because of what we did on this day, in this election, at this defining moment, change has come to America." (President-Elect Barack Obama, [Election Night Victory Speech](#), Grant Park, IL, 11/4/08)

**In 2009, Obama Proclaimed An "End To The Petty Grievances And False Promises, The Recriminations And Worn-Out Dogmas That For Far Too Long Have Strangled Our Politics."**

OBAMA: "On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord. On this day, we come to proclaim an end to the petty grievances and false promises, the recriminations and worn-out dogmas that for far too long have strangled our politics." (President Obama, [Inaugural Address](#), Washington, DC, 1/20/09)

**President Obama, 2010: "We've Got To Change The Tone Of Government And Politics Here In Washington And All Across America. I'm Not Going To Give Up On That Either."** (President Obama, [Remarks by the President at DNC Fundraising Dinner](#), Washington, D.C., 2/5/10)

*By The Time His Second Presidential Campaign Came Around, Obama Began To Back Away From His Promise Of Change*

**In August 2011, Obama Admitted Washington Is Stuck With “More Of The Same,” And “Maybe A Little Worse.”** CNN’s WOLF BLITZER: “When we spoke here end of 2008, ‘hope and change.’ You know what I see in Washington still to this day?” OBAMA: “More of the same.” BLITZER: “The same old same old.” OBAMA: “Yeah.” BLITZER: “A lot of bickering, backstabbing.” OBAMA: “Maybe a little worse.” (CNN’s [“The Situation Room,”](#) 8/16/11)

**President Obama, November 2011: “But In Terms Of Changing The Culture Of Washington, The Fever Has Not Broken Yet. Not Everyone Has Gotten The Word Yet That This Is Not How The American People Want Their Government To Operate.”** (Ken Thomas, “Obama Says Washington Culture Not Yet Changed,” [The Associated Press,](#) 11/7/11)

**President Obama, 2012: “The Most Important Lesson I’ve Learned Is That You Can’t Change Washington From The Inside.”** OBAMA: “You know what—obviously, the fact that we haven’t been able to change the tone in Washington is disappointing. We know now that as soon as I came into office you already had meetings among some of our Republican colleagues saying, ‘How do we figure out how to beat the president?’ And I think that I’ve learned some lessons over the last four years, and the most important lesson I’ve learned is that you can’t change Washington from the inside. You can only change it from the outside.” (President Barack Obama, [Univision Town Hall,](#) Miami, FL, 9/20/12)

## **MORE THAN A YEAR INTO HIS SECOND TERM, OBAMA HAS LONG ABANDONED HIS EFFORTS TO CHANGE WASHINGTON**

**Obama’s “Central Ambition” Of Changing Washington Has “Effectively Been Discarded.”** “A central ambition of Obama’s presidency — to change the way Washington works — has effectively been discarded as a distraction in a time of hardening partisanship.” (Scot Wilson, “Obama’s Rough 2013 Prompts A New Blueprint,” [The Washington Post,](#) 1/25/14)

**Former Obama Press Secretary Robert Gibbs: The White House “Sort Of Stopped Trying” To Change Washington “Long Ago.”** GIBBS: “Well, I think, you know, the ability to change Washington, I think, is something that long ago the White House sort of stopped trying to do and whether or not that’s a good thing, we will look back on history.” (MSNBC’s [“Morning Joe,”](#) 1/28/14)

- **Gibbs: “Somehow We Have All Changed. ... Or Maybe Washington Just Changed Us.”** “Even before he left the White House, Gibbs had asked that question many times, in various forums. He spoke often of being dispirited by all the small accommodations the Obama White House had been forced to make to the status quo that they had run against in 2008: the various exceptions to the no-lobbying rules; what he considered to be the excessive embrace of the Washington media echo-chamber; self-service winning out over public service, or at least loyalty to the president. ‘I remember saying in that meeting, ‘Somehow we have all changed.’ Gibbs said. ‘Or maybe Washington just changed us.’” (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)

**NBC’s Chuck Todd: Obama Has Given Up On Trying To Change Washington.** TODD: “On the big picture legacy, the other thing that the president was elected on was changing politics as we know it in this town and that’s what, has stunned me from the David Remnick interview to the State of the Union itself which all paints the picture of, you know what, he’s resigned to the constraints of the office and the constraints of the politics of this town. He’s given up on trying to break the polarization addiction that this town has. Some will say he added to it, but he’s given that up, and to me, that’s going to be something that I think historians are going to be writing about as the great disappointment.” (NBC’s [“Meet The Press,”](#) 2/2/14)

***The New York Times'* Mark Leibovich: "I Do Think That The Notion Of A Changed Washington Is A Complete Myth."** MARK LEIBOVICH: "The Obama experience was fascinating, because it really did begin in 2008 when my chronology begins. And this was this massive change brigade, which had these big ideas about changing Washington, and the President explicitly said that they'd failed. A very smart person is quoted in the book as saying, sort of rhetorically, did we change Washington or did Washington change us? And that very smart person is on this panel right now. ... But I do think that the notion of a changed Washington is a complete myth." (MSNBC's ["Morning Joe,"](#) 7/16/13)

### ***Obama Awards Plum Positions To Political Supporters And Donors***

#### **During The 2008 Campaign, Obama Said "We Need To Limit The Influence Of Big Donors."**

OBAMA: "I wholeheartedly agree with the idea that we need to limit the influence of big donors on campaigns, and I've co-sponsored legislation to fix the system – legislation Sen. McCain does not support. I am firmly committed to reforming the system as president, so that it's viable in today's campaign climate." (Sen. Barack Obama, Op-Ed, "The System Is Broken," [USA Today,](#) 6/20/08)

- **Before He Was Sworn Into His First Term, Obama Downplayed The Number Of Political Appointments He Would Make To Ambassadorships: "There Will Probably Be Some."** OBAMA: "You know, are there going to be political appointees to ambassadorships? There probably will be some. I don't -- you know, I think it would be -- it would be disingenuous for me to suggest that there are not going to be some excellent public servants, but who haven't come through -- through the ranks of the -- the civil service." (President-Elect Barack Obama, [Press Conference,](#) 1/9/09)
- **36.8 Percent Of Obama's Ambassador Nominees Have Been Political.** ([American Foreign Service Association,](#) Accessed 2/7/14)
- **In His Second Term, Obama Has Nominated 24 Campaign Bundlers To Ambassadorships.** ([Center For Public Integrity,](#) Accessed 2/7/14; White House Office Of The Press Secretary, "Presidential Nominations And Withdrawals Sent To The Senate," [Press Release,](#) 1/30/14)
- **In His First Term, Obama Nominated 40 Campaign Bundlers To Ambassadorships.** "Rewarding donors with ambassadorships is a staple of the presidency, and Obama's picks are slightly above the 30 percent average for envoys drawn from outside the career foreign service, said Susan Johnson, the president of the American Foreign Service Association. In his first term, Obama nominated 59 ambassadors, including 40 bundlers, who lacked experience in the diplomatic corps." (Hans Nichols, "Vogue Editor Wintour Said Possible Pick As U.K. Envoy," [Bloomberg,](#) 12/4/12)

**Former State Department Official Henri J. Barkey: "The Obama Administration's Appointments Suggest That The President Isn't Being Honest When He Says That Diplomacy Is Important To Him."** "The United States claims to value the efforts of diplomats — a point the president reiterated in his State of the Union speech last week. So why do so many seem to think that diplomacy is a profession that anyone can engage in? If you had a plumbing problem, would you call your friendly ambassador to fix it? What message is the president sending to Foreign Service officers and to former and current ambassadors of distinction? The Obama administration's appointments suggest that the president isn't being honest when he says that diplomacy is important to him." (Henri J. Barkey, Op-Ed, "Obama's Ambassador Nominees Are A Disservice To Diplomacy," [The Washington Post,](#) 2/6/14)

- **Barkey: "But For A President Who Just Told The Nation Of His Commitment To Reducing Inequality, This Practice Of Rewarding Unqualified People, Whose 'Good Deed' Is To Have Bundled Campaign Funds, Is Particularly Jarring."** (Henri J. Barkey, Op-Ed, "Obama's Ambassador Nominees Are A Disservice To Diplomacy," [The Washington Post,](#) 2/6/14)

**“President Obama’s A-List Campaign Fundraisers Are Turning Out To Be B-List Ambassador Nominees.”** “President Obama’s A-list campaign fundraisers are turning out to be B-list ambassador nominees. Several of his nominees in recent weeks have had cringe-worthy moments in their confirmation hearings. And people are starting to take notice.” (Abby D. Phillip, “5 Most Cringe-Worthy Blunders From Obama’s Ambassador Nominees,” [ABC News](#), 2/7/14)

### ***The Revolving Door Is In Full Rotation At The Obama White House***

**The Center For Responsive Politics Reports That 395 Individuals Have Been Through Obama’s Revolving Door, With Over 130 Individuals Who Are Former Or Current Registered Lobbyists.** ([Center For Responsive Politics](#), Accessed 1/25/14)

- **PolitiFact: “We Rate Obama’s ‘Revolving Door’ Policy For Former Lobbyists His Biggest Broken Promise.”** (Angie Drobnic Holan, “Not So Fast On Obama Revolving Door Policy,” [PolitiFact](#), 1/23/09)
- **PolitiFact: “Obama Was Very Clear With His Promise. He Said No Lobbyists Would ‘Work On Regulations Or Contracts Directly And Substantially Related To Their Prior Employer For Two Years.’ No Means None. Promise Broken.”** (Angie Drobnic Holan, “Former Lobbyist In The White House? It’s Okay If They Say It’s Okay,” [PolitiFact](#), 3/17/09)

**Mark Leibovich In *This Town*: “One Of The Stubborn Truths Of Obama-Era Washington Is That Everyone Is Now, In Effect, A Special Interest, A Free Agent, Performing Any Number Of Services, In Any Number Of Settings. It Goes Well Beyond The Technical Classification Of ‘Registered Lobbyists.’”** (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)

**Obama’s Distinction Between Registered Lobbyists And Those Who Do Other Public Relations Issue Advocacy Is A Difference That Many On K Street Say Makes Little Sense And Causes More To Move Into The Shadows Of Lobbying Disclosures.** “The Obama administration has drawn a clear distinction between registered lobbyists and those who do public relations or other types of issue advocacy. It’s a difference that many on K Street say makes little sense and actually causes more work to move out of the sunlight of lobbying disclosures and into the shadows.” (Kate Ackley, “Administration Staffers Head Out The Revolving Door,” [Roll Call](#), 3/26/12)

- **“‘The Pledge Is More A PR Thing Than Anything Else,’ One K Street Executive Said. ‘When You Need To Get Around It, You Get Around It. It’s A Joke, And Everyone Knows It’s A Joke.’”** (Kate Ackley, “Administration Staffers Head Out The Revolving Door,” [Roll Call](#), 3/26/12)

### ***Obama’s Prior Calls For Open, Accountable Government Are Laughable***

**The Obama White House “Is Limiting Press Access In Ways That Past Administrations Wouldn’t Have Dared, And President Is Answering To Public In More Controlled Settings Than His Predecessors.”** “At the same time, it is limiting press access in ways that past administrations wouldn’t have dared, and the president is answering to the public in more controlled settings than his predecessors.” (Nancy Benac, “Obama Image Machine Whirs As Press Access Narrows,” [The Associated Press](#), 4/1/13)

- **The Obama Administration Is “In Effect, Its Own News Agency.”** “It’s raising new questions about what’s lost when the White House tries to make an end run around the media, functioning, in effect, as its own news agency.” (Nancy Benac, “Obama Image Machine Whirs As Press Access Narrows,” [The Associated Press](#), 4/1/13)
- **The Associated Press Vice President Santiago Lyon: The Obama Administration “In Hypocritical Defiance” Of His Calls For Transparency “Has Systematically Tried To Bypass**



**The Media.** “Manifestly undemocratic, in contrast, is the way Mr. Obama’s administration — in hypocritical defiance of the principles of openness and transparency he campaigned on — has systematically tried to bypass the media by releasing a sanitized visual record of his activities through official photographs and videos, at the expense of independent journalistic access.” (Santiago Lyon, Op-Ed, “Obama’s Orwellian Image Control,” [The New York Times](#), 12/11/13)

### **CNN’s Brianna Keilar: Obama Is Not Living Up To The Transparency Standards He Set For Himself.**

KEILAR: “You say it’s an issue of distribution being different. But isn’t it also the difference of the standard that this administration has set for itself? You say past White Houses have done things similarly. I mean, anyone here can tell that there’s less access than under the Bush administration, and yet it was President Obama who said---” WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY JAY CARNEY: “Did you cover Bush?” KEILAR: “I did. I did at times. And it was President Obama who talked about transparency being a hallmark of his administration. So isn’t it sort of the problem is that he has set up a standard himself that he’s not meeting, that his White House is not meeting?” ([White House Press Briefing](#), 12/12/13)

### **“New York Times Executive Editor Jill Abramson Says That President Obama’s White House Is The ‘Most Secretive White House’ That She’s Covered During Her Long Tenure As A Political Journalist.”** (Dylan Byers, “Jill Abramson: ‘This Is The Most Secretive White House I Have Ever Dealt With,’” [Politico](#), 1/23/14)

- **Abramson: “I Spent 22 Years Of My Career In Washington And Covered Presidents From President Reagan On Up Through Now, And I Was Washington Bureau Chief Of The Times During George W. Bush’s First Term.”** “I would say it is the most secretive White House that I have ever been involved in covering, and that includes — I spent 22 years of my career in Washington and covered presidents from President Reagan on up through now, and I was Washington bureau chief of the Times during George W. Bush’s first term,” Abramson told Al Jazeera America in an interview that will air on Sunday.” (Dylan Byers, “Jill Abramson: ‘This Is The Most Secretive White House I Have Ever Dealt With,’” [Politico](#), 1/23/14)
- **NBC’s Chuck Todd: “These Guys Are Controlling, These Guys Are Secretive.”** TODD: “When you take that, you take the access limitations, you throw in the aggressive attempts to prosecute leakers, and I think it paints the larger picture that Jill Abramson was trying to point which was Boy, these guys are controlling, these guys are secretive, but I would go to your point- they’re selectively secretive. Obviously, they’re not as secretive when they don’t think it’s a political benefit.” (MSNBC’s [Morning Joe](#), 1/24/14)

## **ITS NO WONDER AMERICANS DON’T HAVE FAITH IN OBAMA’S ABILITY TO LEAD**

**AP-GfK Poll: 58 Percent Of Americans Disapprove Of Obama’s Management Of The Federal Government, While 39 Percent Approve.** ([AP-GfK Poll](#), 1060 A, 3.9% MoE, 1/17-21/14)

**Quinnipiac Poll: “The Obama Administration Is Not Competent Running The Government, Voters Say 53 - 42 Percent.”** ([Quinnipiac University Poll](#), 1933 RV, 2.2 MoE%, 1/15-19/14)

**Quinnipiac Poll: 49 Percent Say Obama Is Not “Honest And Trustworthy,” While 46 Percent Say He Is.** ([Quinnipiac University Poll](#), 1933 RV, 2.2 MoE%, 1/15-19/14)

**Tarrance Group/Lake Research Partners Poll: 57 Percent Of Likely Voters Disapprove Of Obama’s Progress On Working With Congress, While Just 40 Percent Approve.** ([The Tarrance Group And Lake Research Partners Poll](#), 1000 LV, 3.1% MoE, 1/12-16/14)

**Tarrance Group/Lake Research Partners Poll: 55 Percent Of Likely Voters Disapprove Of Obama's Progress On Solving Problems, While Just 43 Percent Approve.** ([The Tarrance Group And Lake Research Partners Poll](#),

1000 LV, 3.1% MoE, 1/12-16/14)