



Voters Need A Vision From Obama?

With Less Than 3 Weeks Left, Voters Still Haven't Been Told Obama's Second Term Plans

OBAMA HASN'T PAINTED A CLEAR PICTURE OF WHAT HE WILL DO IN A SECOND TERM

Last Night, Comedy Central's Jon Stewart Asked Obama If He Had Made A "Strong Enough Affirmative Case" For A Second Term. JON STEWART: Would you say -- Do you feel you have a stronger affirmative case for a second Barack Obama presidency or a stronger negative case for a Mitt Romney presidency? What, what is in your mind -- What is the stronger case to be made or do you prefer a mélange? What is because I, I'm curious, what do you think, do you feel you've made the strong enough affirmative case or a strong enough negative?" (Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," 10/18/12)

The Washington Post's Dan Balz: "There's One Other Weakness In Obama's Message: The Question Of What His Second-Term Agenda Actually Is." (Dan Balz, "Obama, Romney Face A Truly Crucial Week," [The Washington Post](#), 10/13/12)

- **Obama Has Been "Vague" About His Second Term Agenda Throughout The Campaign.** "He has been vague about this throughout the campaign, preferring to focus on criticisms of Romney and defense of his first-term achievements. If he has something important to say about a second term, Tuesday night affords him the opportunity to say it." (Dan Balz, "Obama, Romney Face A Truly Crucial Week," [The Washington Post](#), 10/13/12)

Former Governor Ed Rendell (D-PA): Obama Has Made A "Mistake" In Not Defining His Second Term Agenda. BYLINE's STEVE INSKEEP: "But isn't he still having trouble defining for the public what he would do if he wins a second term?" ED RENDELL: "I think so. And I think it's a mistake." (NPR's [Morning Edition](#), 10/18/12)

TIME's Mark Halperin: "The President Did Not Lay Out A Second Term Agenda." MARK HALPERIN: "I just want to say one thing we haven't brought up yet but it's incredibly important. The President did not lay out a second term agenda. And if there's an undercurrent here, that could really hurt him, not in the room, because it wasn't evident, it was absent. He didn't lay out a second term agenda any more than he did in the first debate. And that is where he is the weakest. And he didn't address it, I thought at all." (MSNBC's [Morning Joe](#), 10/17/12)

Democracy Corps Memo: Obama "Must Offer A Bold Narrative, Bold Policies And The Clear Choice." "This research suggests, and we believe, that the president must offer a bold narrative, bold

policies, and the clear choice for the future focused on restoring the middle class if he is to get a meaningful mandate that will enable him to govern and face the great challenges ahead.” (Stan Greenberg, James Carville, and Erica Seifert, “Getting To The Bold Policy Offer Winning Now Requires,” [Democracy Corps](#), 10/15/12)

- **Obama Has Only Offered A “Modest Vision” Of A Second Term.** “The first debate really did disrupt the race and presents a painful real-time test of what happens when the president tries to convince people of progress and offer a very modest vision of future change Voters are not looking for continuity but changes that help the average Joe.” (Stan Greenberg, James Carville, and Erica Seifert, “Getting To The Bold Policy Offer Winning Now Requires,” [Democracy Corps](#), 10/15/12)

The New York Times’ Tom Friedman: Obama’s Weakness Is The Question Of “How Will The Next Four Years Really Be Different?” TOM FRIEDMAN: “I continue to believe Obama has a weakness when it comes to the question of will the next four years really be different? Do you have a plan that excites you and me to get out of my chair and say that’s the guy, that’s it, that’s the person I want to follow now. He has not closed that deal.” (MSNBC’s [“Morning Joe,”](#) 10/17/12)

THE OBAMA CAMPAIGN MADE A “STRATEGIC CHOICE” TO OFFER NEGATIVE ATTACKS OVER A SECOND TERM AGENDA

In 2008, Obama Attributed “Stale Tactics To Scare Voters” To A Lack Of “Fresh Ideas.” OBAMA: “Because if you don’t have any fresh ideas, then you use stale tactics to scare the voters. If you don’t have a record to run on, then you paint your opponent as someone people should run from. You make a big election about small things.” (Senator Barack Obama, [Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention](#), Denver, CO, 8/28/08)

Democrat Strategist: The Obama Campaign Made A Strategic Choice To Avoid Talking About The Future And Instead Focus On Tearing Down His Opponent. “Another Democratic strategist told CBS News that the Obama campaign ‘made a strategic choice’ to avoid talking about the future and instead focus on tearing down his opponent Mitt Romney. The decision, the strategist said, was a response to the mood of the electorate, the status of the economy and likely a host of other factors. There’s no reason to think the president will now change tactics and offer additional details about his agenda.” (Leigh Ann Caldwell, “With 19 Days To Go Until Election Day, Obama Stays Vague,” [CBS News](#), 10/18/12)

- **“Obama’s Decision to Offer Relatively Few Details Concerning Agenda Differs From His 2008 Presidential Run.”** “Mr. Obama’s decision to offer relatively few details concerning his agenda differs from his 2008 presidential run, when he promised to pass health care reform, immigration reform, climate change legislation, an increase in the minimum wage, an expansion of Pell grants and he vowed to close Guantanamo Bay.” (Leigh Ann Caldwell, “With 19 Days To Go Until Election Day, Obama Stays Vague,” [CBS News](#), 10/18/12)
- **New York Magazine’s Frank Rich: Obama’s “Political Hit Men” Indicated That Their Attack Ads Were “Inevitable” As Far Back As August 2011.** “And yet from the blowback that erupted once his Bain ad hit the fan—from his own camp, from the pious arbiters of Beltway manners, and, of course, from his adversaries—you’d think Romney was an innocent civilian under assault by a drone. What was everyone so shocked about? As far back as August 2011, Obama’s political hit men were signaling the inevitable to Politico: The president, ‘resigned to running for reelection in a glum nation,’ had little choice ‘but to run a slashing, personal campaign aimed at disqualifying his likeliest opponent.’” (Frank Rich, “Frank Rich: Nuke ‘Em,” [New York Magazine](#), 6/17/12)

- **From April To September, Obama Ran 270,000 Negative Ads.** “All told, from the moment Mr. Romney emerged as the likely Republican nominee in April through most of September, Mr. Obama ran nearly triple the number of commercials he did, according to Kantar, about 347,000, nearly 270,000 negative. Mr. Romney ran about 121,000, more than 99,000 of them negative.” (Jim Rutenberg and Jeremy W. Peters, “Obama Outspending Romney On TV Ads,” [The New York Times](#), 10/2/12)

House Democrat Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) To Obama: “I Think The American People Really Need To Hear Your Vision For The Next Four Years ... I Don’t Think The Negative Advertising Alone Is Going To Work.” “Democrats weren’t shy about taking their case to the president directly. At a mid-July White House event, Obama found himself standing in the corner with Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid. Pelosi—the Democrat who pushed harder to get Obama ‘to start acting more like a Democrat’ during the 2010 midterms—now used her face time to deliver a lecture to Obama on the virtues of positive campaigning based on his record and future plans. ‘Mr. President,’ she said, sotto voce, according to a staffer briefed on the interaction. ‘I think the American people really need to hear your vision for the next four years ... I don’t think the negative advertising alone is going to work.’” (Glenn Thrush, *Obama’s Last Stand*, 2012)

Obama Has Gone Negative Because He Cannot Offer Voters The “Status Quo”

New York Magazine’s John Heilemann: “The Status Quo Is Not Acceptable To Voters Now.” JOHN HEILEMAN: “A big part of the problem with that is that President Obama is not putting on a broader scale his argument is, effectively at the debate the other night: I want a second term because I want to keep doing what I was doing, what I have been doing for the last four years and this a wrong track country. The country, the right track wrong track, is getting better but 55% thinks we’re on the wrong track. The status quo is not acceptable to voters now.” (MSNBC’s “Now With Alex Wagner,” 10/18/12)

“Democrats Long Have Said That Obama’s Best Hopes For Re-Election May Lie With Disqualifying Romney” Given The State Of The Economy And Public Disapproval For Obama’s Signature Policies. “Democrats long have said Obama’s best hopes for re-election may lie with disqualifying Romney given that the economy remains sluggish and the country is divided over or outright opposes some of the president’s signature policies, like the health care law.” (Beth Fouhy, “Obama Negative Ads Could Hurt Personal Popularity,” [The Associated Press](#), 7/24/12)

- **“‘Unless Things Change And Obama Can Run On Accomplishments, He Will Have To Kill Romney,’ Said A Prominent Democratic Strategist Aligned With The White House.”** (Ben Smith and Jonathan Martin, “Obama Plan: Destroy Romney,” [Politico](#), 8/9/11)
- **Democrat Pollsters Pat Caddell And Doug Schoen: Obama Can Only Win By Running “The Most Negative Campaign In History.”** “Put simply, it seems that the White House has concluded that if the president cannot run on his record, he will need to wage the most negative campaign in history to stand any chance. With his job approval ratings below 45% overall and below 40% on the economy, the president cannot affirmatively make the case that voters are better off now than they were four years ago. He—like everyone else—knows that they are worse off.” (Patrick H. Caddell and Douglas E. Schoen, “The Hillary Moment,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 11/21/11)

MSNBC’s Chris Matthews: “When Presidents Attack Challenges They Look Scared By Definition, Anyway, Because They Should Run On Their Records.” (MSNBC’s “The Chris Matthews Show,” 4/22/12)