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Saluting Obama's "Stupendous" 100 Days

"It didn't take long for Barack Obama — for all his youth and inexperience — to get acclimated to his new role as the calming leader of a country in crisis.... Rookie jitters? Far from it.... For the past three months, Obama has spoken in firm, yet soothing tones. Sometimes he has used a just-folks approach to identify with economically struggling citizens. He has displayed wonkish tendencies, too, appearing much like the college instructor he once was while discussing the intricacies of the economic collapse. He has engaged in witty banter, teasing lawmakers, staffers, journalists and citizens alike. He has struck a statesmanlike stance, calling for a renewed partnership between the United States and its allies...."

— AP Washington correspondent Liz Sidoti in an April 25 dispatch, "Obama quickly, confidently adapts to presidency."

"The legislative achievements have been stupendous — the \$789 billion stimulus bill, the budget plan that is still being hammered out (and may, ultimately, include the next landmark safety-net program, universal health insurance). There has also been a cascade of new policies to address the financial crisis — massive interventions in the housing and credit markets, a market-based plan to buy the toxic assets that many banks have on their books, a plan to bail out the auto industry and a strict new regulatory regime proposed for Wall Street. Obama has also completely overhauled foreign policy, from Cuba to Afghanistan. 'In a way, Obama's 100 days is even more dramatic than Roosevelt's,' says Elaine Kamarck of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. 'Roosevelt only had to deal with a domestic crisis. Obama has had to overhaul foreign policy as well, including two wars. And that's really the secret of why this has seemed so spectacular.'"

— *Time's* Joe Klein in the magazine's May 4 cover story on Barack Obama's first 100 days as President.

Rahm and George: Two Buddies Sharing a Single Brain?

CBS's Katie Couric: "What's your greatest accomplishment?"

White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel: "A renewed sense of hope in America and a sense that we can actually meet these challenges.... We've helped give America that sense of confidence again, that we can meet these challenges and this country is headed, finally, in the right direction."

— *CBS Evening News*, April 29.

"You would have to say his number one accomplishment has been to inspire a sense of confidence in the country.... That confidence, that optimism, not only gives President Obama a political cushion, but it could have a real world economic impact."

— ABC's George Stephanopoulos talking about Obama's first 100 days on *World News*, April 29.



Awestruck by Obama's "Mastery of the Issues"

CNN Senior Analyst David Gergen: "In terms of mastery of the issues, we have rarely had a President who is as well briefed and speaks in as articulate a way as this President does. He's nuanced. He's very complete.... He's taken it to a whole different level in the way he speaks about issues...."

Correspondent Jessica Yellin: "What he's done tonight is shown that the Republicans have an enormous challenge going forward, because this man is tackling so many issues at once, and in such a capable way, that it leaves the Republicans unable to target any one issue."

— CNN live coverage following President Obama's press conference, April 29.

"Barack Obama is a truly flabbergasting President. And in a good way — not the way some of his predecessors were. He's not flabberghastly.... He's not the student who wears a button that says, 'Smartest kid in class,' but clearly he is, at least when surrounded by the White House press corps."

— *Washington Post* TV critic Tom Shales, in an April 30 review of Obama's press conference.

Arlen Specter vs. Far Right “Fringe of the Party”

“There’s a big message here, which is that the Republican Party has moved so far to the right, that it is making itself uncompetitive in significant parts of the country, like the Northeast. This is really a cannon shot at them, saying this party is no longer competitive in lots of the country.”

— CNN political analyst Bill Schneider, 12pm ET hour of *CNN Newsroom*, April 28.

“Specter told us today he thought that he could not win re-election in a primary in his home state.... Specter said he couldn’t risk that, and said that voters who tend to turn out in the primaries tend to be on the fringe of the party, not a moderate Republican like he is.”

— Kelly O’Donnell on the April 28 *NBC Nightly News*.

CBS reporter Chip Reid: “Moderate Senator Arlen Specter says he’s leaving the Republican Party because the Republican Party left him.... Specter blames the party’s increasingly conservative tilt.”

Senator Arlen Specter (D-PA): “There ought to be a rebellion. There ought to be an uprising.”

— *CBS Evening News*, April 28.



Good Grief, What Was He Expecting?

“I think we’ve learned that he’s more moderate than we had expected.”

— *New York Times* Washington correspondent David Sanger, on ABC’s *This Week* April 26, when asked to name the “most important thing we’ve learned” about President Barack Obama during his first one hundred days.

NYT Ethicist: “Great to Have President Who’s Not Insane”

“I’m a huge Obama fan. I think it’s such an unbelievably great thing to have a President who’s competent and not insane.”

— Randy Cohen, “The Ethicist” columnist for *The New York Times Magazine*, HBO’s *Real Time with Bill Maher*, April 24.

ABC Horrified Terrorist Might Have Faced a Caterpillar

Charles Gibson: “Tonight, secret memos. New documents reveal in vivid detail just how far the Bush administration went in interrogating terror suspects, using insects, confinement boxes, water-boards and more....”

Legal correspondent Jan Crawford Greenburg: “The memos released from the Justice Department today are chilling in their detail.... They approved prisoners placed in a cramped confinement box with an insect....”

George Stephanopoulos: “Surprisingly, even some congressional officials who had the highest security clearances were surprised by some of the details today, especially that detail about the fact that [al Qaeda leader Abu] Zubayda was tortured with an insect in a confinement box. That was surprising.”

— ABC’s *World News*, April 16. That same night, NBC’s Pete Williams reported interrogators received permission to put a harmless insect “like a caterpillar” in a box with Zubayda, “but that technique was never used.”



CBS’s Smith: Shouldn’t Bush Officials Face “Recrimination”?

“You fought a long battle with the [Bush] White House over this issue, said they ought to follow the Army manual, which the White House refused to [do].... Why do you feel so strongly that those who helped create this policy should not face some sort of recrimination?”

— Co-host Harry Smith to Republican Senator John McCain on CBS’s *Early Show*, April 23.

“Not a Very Patriotic Thing” for Cheney to Criticize Obama

“[Dick Cheney] is becoming a forlorn and, I think, soon to be even further disgraced figure.... What he is betting on — and this is the sick thing to me, Keith — is that if there’s another attack that he will then be back as a huge and important figure who predicted that this would happen if we stopped torturing. And this is his bid for historical resurrection.... By calling the President weak — for a former Vice President to say that, that’s not a very patriotic thing to do — he is positioning himself to say, ‘I told you so,’ should we be attacked again.”

— *Newsweek*’s Jonathan Alter discussing Obama’s new limits on interrogation methods, MSNBC’s *Countdown*, April 24.

Clamoring for Crackdown on U.S. Guns

“You know, [Mexican] President Calderon wants a reinstatement of the assault weapons ban that expired during the Bush administration....How can President Obama, who ran against assault weapons, how can he not deliver on that?”

— Matt Lauer to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, April 16 *Today*.

“On the violence issue, 6,500 people were killed in drug violence in 2008 alone, 95 percent of the guns used were out of the United States. What is the U.S. going to do to stop the guns from getting there?”

— ABC’s Diane Sawyer to Napolitano, April 16 *Good Morning America*.

“Is one of the other things we can do reinstate the assault weapons ban in this country? Because President Calderon has said that ever since it expired, violence there has escalated.”

— Co-host Maggie Rodriguez to Napolitano on CBS’s *Early Show*, April 16.



Barack + Michelle = “Springtime in America!”

“One of the great surprises is what a force-multiplier Michelle Obama has turned out to be, because these two are working in such, sort of, flawless concert. You know as the world is talking about torture and the Bush administration, then we have Michelle with her vegetable garden. Talk about springtime in America!”

— Tina Brown, Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Beast Web site, CBS’s *Face the Nation* on April 26.

Tax Protesters: “Wimpy, Whiny Weasels” Who Hate America

“Why are they out there whining with this Tea Party thing? Just a bunch of wimpy, whiny, weasels who don’t love their country and don’t want to support — there are guys at Walter Reed who gave their legs for my country, and they’re whining because they have to write a check? Mr. Cavuto, Mr. Hannity, all the rest of those guys, they have representation, they just lost an election — that’s not tyranny, that’s democracy.”

— CNN contributor Paul Begala on the April 15 *Imus in the Morning* radio show, as played on FNC’s *Hannity* April 17.

Tea Parties Are Racist; Fox News Is for Idiots

“Let’s be very honest about what this is about. It’s not about bashing Democrats, it’s not about taxes, they have no idea what the Boston tea party was about, they don’t know their history at all. This is about hating a black man in the White House. This is racism straight up. That is nothing but a bunch of tea-bagging rednecks....Fox News loves to foment this anti-intellectualism because that’s their bread and butter. If you have a cerebral electorate, Fox News goes down the toilet, you know, very, very fast....They have tackled that elusive...Klan with a ‘K’ demo.”

— Actress/activist Janeane Garofalo on MSNBC’s *Countdown*, April 16.



Classy Olbermann: “Reagan’s Dead, and He Was a Lousy President”

“Time for *Countdown*’s number two story, ‘Worst Persons in the World.’ The bronze goes to Mike Kilburn, county commissioner of Warren County, Ohio....The commissioners there are rejecting \$373,000 in stimulus money for three new buses and vans meant to get the county’s rural residents to health care and educational opportunities. Kilburn said, ‘I’ll let Warren County go broke before taking any of Obama’s filthy money. I’m tired of paying for people who don’t have. As Reagan said, government is not the answer, it’s the problem.’ Uh, Commissioner Kilburn, Reagan’s dead, and he was a lousy President.”

— Keith Olbermann on MSNBC’s *Countdown*, April 22.

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