



Barack Obama: Anatomy of an Ideologue

As with G.W. Bush before him, much time is spent arguing about Barack Obama's character. Does he mean well and just not govern well, or is it something else? What can be missed during this debate, however, is that most damage is done in the name of doing good.

Consider, for instance, a Muslim parent teaching his child to engage in violent jihad. Like any parent, he almost surely wants his child healthy and successful. Like any *wise* parent, though, he also may believe that if he had to choose between his child being healthy and successful, and being good, he'd have to choose goodness. After all, what does it profit a man to gain the world but to lose his soul? Only, he defines "good" differently from how you do.

Similarly, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a leader who expressed willingness to sacrifice half Iran's population to wipe Israel off the map. Does this mean he doesn't care if his nation is healthy and successful? More likely, he considers those priorities secondary to what is good, which he defines much, much differently from how you do.

This gets at why people so often talk past each other when discussing more mainstream politicians. If we focus on whether a given candidate is bent on doing what we consider evil, others, knowing the truth that people virtually always *intend* to do "good," may dismiss it as radicalism. So a better question often is: What is the person's conception of good?

This brings us back to Obama. Like the average American, his goals are directed toward what he considers good. But on what is considered good is where he parts company — quite drastically — with the average American.

In 2008, Obama [said](#) that under his policies, "[i]f somebody wants to build a coal power plant, they can; it's just that it will bankrupt them...." Once in office, he limited permits for oil drilling on public lands, stopped the Keystone pipeline, and halted Gulf drilling while helping finance drilling in Brazil. This may seem unfathomable to the average American, who wants our nation to be strong and energy sufficient and who puts the United States first.

But it's explained by the president's words and actions. He appointed as energy secretary Steven Chu, a man who [said](#) in 2008, "Somehow we have to figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe" (about eight dollars a gallon). In the same vein, Obama said in 2008, "We can't drive our SUVs and eat as much as we want and keep our homes on 72 degrees at all times ... and then just expect that other countries are going to say OK. That's not leadership. That's not going to happen." (We must ask, just how much should we be allowed to eat?)





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This reflects three components of the leftist moral vision. The first is radical environmentalism, whose tenets are embraced by many Obama administration officials. Former regulatory czar Cass Sunstein wants to ban hunting and give animals the right to sue; science czar John Holdren once co-authored a book which stated that forced sterilization and abortion, adding sterilant to drinking water or staple foods, and having the government dictate family size were proposals that “deserve discussion”; and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said in 2008 that he would reject all new offshore-drilling ventures.

The second component is the relinquishment of sovereignty, as reflected in Obama’s comment that we can’t just “expect that other countries are going to say OK” (as if they should have veto power over what we can eat, drive, and set our thermostat at). Holdren proposed having human reproduction regulated via a “planetary regime” administered by the United Nations; climate czar Todd Stern believes the UN should force climate-change regulations on the world’s nations; and State Department counsel Harold Koh wants to eliminate distinctions between U.S. constitutional law and international law.

The third component is reflected in the common leftist refrain, “The United States has only 5 percent of the world’s population but uses 24 percent of its energy.” The idea is that this is an unfair “imbalance” that should be addressed. And it’s what motivates Obama to want, aside from an overall reduction in energy use and availability, to redistribute energy production and usage from the United States to Third World nations.

Something else that may seem unfathomable to average Americans was the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) decision to drop charges against Black Panthers who intimidated white voters in Philadelphia in 2008. After all, prosecuting them would have been a win-win for Obama; he wouldn’t have lost the black vote, yet he could have claimed to truly be a post-racial president.

But Obama’s ideology again tells the tale. J. Christian Adams, a former DOJ attorney, [reports](#) that the department under Obama simply will not prosecute voting-rights cases in which the victims are white. Moreover, Adams says that for decades Attorney General Eric Holder kept in his wallet a quotation [reading](#), “Blackness is more important than anything, and the black US attorney has common cause with the black criminal.”

Also telling is the 2007 video of Obama’s Hampton University speech in which he engaged in race-baiting, [falsely claiming](#) that black Hurricane Katrina victims were denied aid by the mostly white Senate, despite the fact that he was *present* when the Senate voted to grant the aid. Then there’s Obama’s embrace of critical-race-theory proponent Derrick Bell, who, as Thomas Sowell [puts it](#), “saw his role as deliberately annoying white people.” Of course, this is in character, as Obama spent 20 years attending the church of Rev. Jeremiah Wright, a man whom Obama [quoted in his book](#) as saying, “white folks’ greed runs a world in need.”

These are the people whom Obama picked as allies. And in the cases of Holdren, Holder, and the other five aforementioned public officials — they are the people the president *chose* to represent his administration.

Next there is Obama’s “Sustainable Communities Initiative,” which [seeks](#) to “abolish America’s suburbs” and transfer much of their tax money to cities. Obama is pushing this because he was [taught early on](#) that the suburbs have been sucking prosperity from the cities and are thus largely responsible for the latter’s woes.

Obama’s ideology also animates his foreign policy. Why has the president bowed before potentates and



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apologized for America? Why has he supported Arab Spring movements that are bringing anti-American jihadists to power but has alienated, and thus reduced our influence with, allies such as Israel? Thomas Sowell offers an [explanation](#): “What many regard as a failure of Obama’s foreign policy, especially in the Middle East, may well be one of his biggest successes. His desire to redistribute wealth domestically is part of a larger ideological vision that includes a redistribution of power internationally.”

This brings us to the point. However much one may think Obama cares about the United States’ energy sufficiency, strength, and comfort; and about whites, the suburbs, the rich, and the nation in general, one thing is certain: There are things he cares about more. Obama sees the world as a place where Western discrimination, greed, and oppression have picked winners and losers. Now it’s time for the score to be evened through redistribution. Redistribution of money from rich to poor, from suburbs to cities, from whites to blacks; redistribution of energy production and consumption from America to the Third World; redistribution of perceived injustice from blacks to whites; and redistribution of power and prestige from the United States to foreign nations and the UN. And Obama wants this not because he intends to do evil, but because it’s his ideology. It is his conception of good.

And to this sense of principle should be added something else generally possessed by ideologues: passion. When the president said we couldn’t drive those SUVs and eat all we wanted, note that he boldly proclaimed, “That’s not going to happen.” And what should we expect from a passionate moral crusader? Well, to use a variation on a C.S. Lewis line: A robber baron’s cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who harm us for a perceived greater good will harm us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.



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