

It's time to face facts: Obama's presidency was a failure

By **Kyle Smith**

| Updated

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The closing arguments for the Obama years are arriving, and they aren't helping the outgoing president. A case in point is

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a new book published this week, one that acknowledges “Obama’s supporters have experienced [his presidency] as a continuous disappointment.”

Those supporters, and others, must have noticed that “for most of Obama’s term, wage gains were largely confined to the rich.” Or that “The administration’s planning in Libya clearly failed” or “It is certain that the actual outcome [of Obama’s Syria policy] was disastrous.”

Even many of President Obama’s proudest achievements look about as enduring as April snow: “If there was a single aspect of Obama’s legacy most vulnerable to reversal, it was his achievements on climate change,” the book says, and “Obama’s regulatory offensive is, of course, vulnerable to reversal by Donald Trump or the Supreme Court, since it rested upon executive action.” The longest chapter is titled “The Inevitability of Disappointment.”

Yet the title of the book containing these quotations is “**Audacity: How Barack Obama Defied His Critics and Created a Legacy That Will Prevail**,” by the New York magazine columnist and lefty firebrand Jonathan Chait.

Sustained coherence seems to elude the author. On Page 99 we hear about those “overblown or even false claims that the new law [ObamaCare] was raising premiums,” but three pages later we

PC police won't let us use these words anymore

learn, “Big insurers like Aetna pulled out of the exchanges, reducing options, and insurers in most markets raised their premiums.” Oh. Republican opposition, which boils down to wariness of new spending while Obama is racking up more debt than the previous 43 presidents combined, doesn’t earn a rational counter-argument.

No, the GOP simply means “rage.” “Republican terror,” Chait writes, is “berserk” with a “fierce and even crazed tone” (this last describes Paul Ryan).

On Page 31, Chait declares “the simplistic initial hope of Obama’s giddy supporters that the symbolism of a black president could help heal, if not eliminate, racial prejudice turned out to have a real basis in fact.” But 20 pages back, he comes to the opposite conclusion: “racism continues to lurk deep in the American psyche,” “Americans had split once again into mutually uncomprehending racial camps,” “the continued existence of racism in American life has been confirmed by a library of social-science research.”

Meanwhile, current polling on the matter is clear. American worries about race relations, which had been stable for nearly 20 years, increased markedly in Obama’s second term, reaching a new high last spring, while the president’s approval rating on race issues, which was very high when his first term began, has

Why are modern
'campaign books' all
about the
reporters?

ranged from 48 percent to a low of 26 percent for the last seven years or so, according to Gallup.

Chait grouses that the 2009 stimulus was dismally small and admits that the Republican critique of it as funding "a wish list of long-standing Democratic policies" had "an element of truth."

Yet he also celebrates it as saving us from depression. Really? The downturn actually ended in June 2009 as the first stimulus checks were being signed. Only an Obama fanboy would argue, just as a fire is going out, that the whole forest is about to burn down.

Moreover, deep recessions (such as the 1981-82 one) that cause people to cut way back are generally followed by booming rebounds. This one wasn't. Far from turbo-charging the economy, the stimulus was such a dud that five years after the recovery began, 72 percent of Americans said in a poll that they thought we were still in a recession. "The stimulus ultimately failed to do what America expected it to do — bring about a strong, sustainable recovery," wrote Michael Grabell of ProPublica.

That's hard to dispute given the sluggishness of the recovery — economic growth has been by far the weakest of any post-recession period since World War II. But Chait has zilch to say about that. Nor does Chait mention that Obama

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is the first president since Herbert Hoover to fail to preside over a single year of 3 percent growth. But hey, Obama fans, stay in your bubble. It's cozy there.

Sealing himself off certainly didn't work for the Bubble President, though. President Obama entered office thinking: "They love me! So they'll love everything I do!" No. He had no backup plan for what to do if Congress became less than generous with the rubber stamp. Virtually every president has to negotiate with Capitol Hill — Ronald Reagan faced hostile Democrats in the House for his entire presidency — but Obama thought horse-trading was beneath him.

So he contented himself giving speeches and signing executive orders that Donald Trump is about to feed into the shredder. It looks like Obama's chapter in the history books is going to be much like his résumé when he was elected president: thin.

Roseanne may be
the only one in
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Disney World is
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