

**THE DAILY
BEAST**

READ THIS SKIP THAT

BLOGS & STORIES

PRINT

He's Done Everything Wrong

by *Mort Zuckerman*

January 19, 2010 | 11:19pm

Obama punted on the economy and reversed the fortunes of the Democrats in 365 days.

He's misjudged the character of the country in his whole approach. There's the saying, "It's the economy, stupid." He didn't get it. He was determined somehow or other to adopt a whole new agenda. He didn't address the main issue.

This health-care plan is going to be a fiscal disaster for the country. Most of the country wanted to deal with costs, not expansion of coverage. This is going to raise costs dramatically.

In the campaign, he said he would change politics as usual. He did change them. It's now worse than it was. I've now seen the kind of buying off of politicians that I've never seen before. It's politically corrupt and it's starting at the top. It's revolting.

Five states got deals on health care—one of them was Harry Reid's. It is disgusting, just disgusting. I've never seen anything like it. The unions just got them to drop the tax on Cadillac plans in the health-care bill. It was pure union politics. They just went along with it. It's a bizarre form of political corruption. It's bribery. I suppose they could say, that's the system. He was supposed to change it or try to change it.

Even that is not the worst part. He could have said, "I know. I promised these things, but let me try to do them one at a time." You want to deal with health care? Fine. Issue No. 1 with health care was the cost. You know I think it was 37 percent or 33 who were worried about coverage. Fine, I wrote an editorial to this effect. Focus on cost-containment first. But he's trying to boil the ocean, trying to do too much. This is not leadership.

• [More Daily Beast opinion on Obama's first year](#)

Obama's ability to connect with voters is what launched him. But what has surprised me is how he has failed to connect with the voters since he's been in office. He's had so much overexposure. You have to be selective. He was doing five Sunday shows. How many press conferences? And now people stop listening to him. The fact is he had 49.5 million listeners to first speech on the economy. On Medicare, he had 24 million. He's lost his audience. He has not rallied public opinion. He has plunged in the polls more than any other political figure since we've been using polls. He's done everything wrong. Well, not everything, but the major things.

I don't consider it a triumph. I consider it a disaster.

One business leader said to me, "In the Clinton administration, the policy people were at the center, and the political people were on the sideline. In the Obama administration, the political people are at the center, and the policy people are on the sidelines."



AP Photo

I'm very disappointed. We endorsed him. I voted for him. I supported him publicly and privately.

I hope there are changes. I think he's already laid in huge problems for the country. The fiscal program was a disaster. You have to get the money as quickly as possible into the economy. They didn't do that. By end of the first year, only one-third of the money was spent. Why is that?

He should have jammed a stimulus plan into Congress and said, "This is it. No changes. Don't give me that bullshit. We have a national emergency." Instead they turned it over to Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi who can run circles around him.

It's very sad. It's really sad.

He's improved America's image in the world. He absolutely did. But you have to translate that into something. Let me tell you what a major leader said to me recently. "We are convinced," he said, "that he is not strong enough to confront his enemy. We are concerned," he said "that he is not strong to support his friends."

The political leadership of the world is very, very dismayed. He better turn it around. The Democrats are going to get killed in this election. Jesus, looks what's happening in Massachusetts.

It's really interesting because he had brilliant, brilliant political instincts during the campaign. I don't know what has happened to them. His appointments present somebody who has a lot to learn about how government works. He better get some very talented businesspeople who know how to implement things. It's unbelievable. Everybody says so. You can't believe how dismayed people are. That's why he's plunging in the polls.

I can't predict things two years from now, but if he continues on the downward spiral he is on, he won't be reelected. In the meantime, the Democrats have recreated the Republican Party. And when I say Democrats, I mean the Obama administration. In the generic vote, the Democrats were ahead something like 52 to 30. They are now behind the Republicans 48 to 44 in the last poll. Nobody has ever seen anything that dramatic.

Mortimer B. Zuckerman is chairman and editor in chief of U.S. News & World Report and publisher of the New York Daily News. He is also the co-founder and chairman of Boston Properties Inc. He is a trustee of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Washington Institute for Near East Studies, and the International Institute of Strategic Studies.

For more of The Daily Beast, [become a fan](#) on Facebook and [follow](#) us on Twitter.

For inquiries, please contact The Daily Beast at editorial@thedailybeast.com.

URL: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/blogs-and-stories/2010-01-19/hes-done-everything-wrong/p/>

PRINT
