



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on September 28, 2012

Obama Versus Obama: Part III

Much puzzling behavior by Barack Obama falls into place when we go behind the image that he projects (“Obama 1”) to the factual reality of the man’s whole life and thrust (“Obama 2”).

Obama himself is well aware of the nature and importance of his image. In his own words, “I serve as a blank screen on which people of vastly different political stripes project their own views.” An 18th century philosopher put the matter bluntly: “When I speak, I put on a mask. When I act, I am forced to take it off.”



Many of Barack Obama’s actions as President of the United States reflect neither political expediency nor an attempt to promote the best interests of the American people. Take, for example, his bowing low from the waist to foreign leaders.

No President of the United States had ever done that before. It gained Obama nothing with the voters, nor was there any reason to think that he expected it to. Why then did he do it?

What did it accomplish? It brought the United States down a peg, in the eyes of the world, something that he has sought to do in many other ways.

These bows were perfectly consistent with his view of a maldistribution of power and prestige internationally, just as his domestic agenda reflects a felt need for a redistribution of wealth and power within American society.

It is not just the United States, but the Western world in general, including Israel, that needs to be brought down a peg, from the standpoint of the ideology prevalent among the people with whom Barack Obama has allied himself consistently for decades.

Against that background, it is not at all puzzling that President Obama has clamped down on offshore oil drilling by Americans in the Gulf of Mexico, but has actually encouraged and subsidized offshore oil drilling by Brazil with our tax dollars.

Nor is it surprising that he imposes draconian restrictions on industrial activities in the United States, in the name of fighting “global warming,” while accepting the fact that Third World nations that are beginning to industrialize will generate far more pollution than any restrictions in America can possibly offset.

That is another example of international redistribution — and payback for perceived past oppressions or exploitation of the West against the non-West. So is replacing pro-Western governments in the Middle East with Islamic extremist governments.

Some people may have gotten focused on the issue of Barack Obama’s birth certificate because so much of what he has done seems foreign to American ideals, traditions and interests. But birth tells us nothing about loyalty. One-time American Communist leader Earl Browder was descended from the



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Pilgrims.

Those who have questioned whether Barack Obama is really a citizen of the United States have missed the larger question: Whether he considers himself a citizen of the world. Think about this remarkable statement by Obama during the 2008 campaign: “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 every other country is going to say, ‘OK.’”

Are Americans supposed to let foreigners tell them how to live their lives? The implied answer is clearly “Yes!” When President Obama went to the United Nations for authority to take military action and ignored the Congress of the United States, that was all consistent with his vision of the way the world should be.

How has Obama gotten away with so many things that are foreign to American beliefs and traditions? Partly it is because of a quiescent media, sharing many of his ideological views and/or focused on the symbolism of his being “the first black President.” But part of his success must be credited — if that is the word — to his own rhetorical talents and his ability to project an image that many people accept and welcome.

The role of a confidence man is not to convince skeptics, but to help the gullible believe what they want to believe. Most of what Barack Obama says sounds very persuasive if you don’t know the facts — and often sounds like sheer nonsense if you do. But he is not trying to convince skeptics, nor worried about looking ridiculous to informed people who won’t vote for him anyway.

This is a source of much polarization between those who see and accept Obama 1 and those who see through that facade to Obama 2.

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