



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 18, 2012

## Obama's Cleveland Speech Leaves His Supporters Cold

Within hours of what was supposed to be an “important,” even pivotal, speech on the economy to his supporters in Cleveland last Thursday, Obama's usual symphony of media liberals was turning sour. Clive Cook, senior editor at [The Atlantic](#), a reliably liberal and usually dependable supporter of the President, called his presentation “an un compelling unmemorable performance” during which “he talked too long and kept repeating himself.” Cook complained that Obama has repeatedly been unable to articulate his policies, [seen by an increasing number of Americans as failing](#), especially his defense of his incomprehensibly tangled, invasive, and costly healthcare act that was foisted onto the American people early in his first term. Cook explained that ObamaCare is unpopular



because it is unfathomably complicated, because it threatens great disruption to a system that voters are accustomed to and most quite like, and because they don't believe it's going to end up costing them nothing.

It's unpopular because the Democrats did all this knowing that most voters were unhappy [with the plan], and pressed on as though it didn't matter.

We were assured the selling of the policy would be done after the reform became law. We're still waiting.

More than that, Cook complained that the president missed a great opportunity, hailed by the media to be a “big event,” which turned out instead to be another example of the current administration's insensitivity to what's happening in the real world:

The White House seems stone-deaf to the country's doubts about its policies. The polling on health-care reform, the polling on deficits and debt, the election of Scott Brown [in Massachusetts], the mid-term rout of House Democrats [in 2010], [the victory of Scott Walker in] Wisconsin — it's as though these things never happened.

It's not even that they're dismissed, which would be bad enough. They aren't even acknowledged. They aren't even noticed. The White House just carries on regardless.

What the president hoped to do in Cleveland was reassure those few who are still undecided that a vote for him for another four years will result in a stronger economy, lower deficits, and more jobs. He intended to play off his success in reviving the economy during his first term, comparing it to the plans of his likely rival Mitt Romney, who Obama claims, plans to turn the clock back to the Bush days that resulted in the Great Recession. Said the president:



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So the debate in this election is not about whether we need to grow faster, or whether we need to create more jobs, or whether we need to pay down our debt....

The debate in this election is about how we grow faster, and how we create more jobs, and how we pay down our debt....

In this election, you have two very different visions to choose from.

Then, in a 50-minute talk that sounded much more like a stump speech than a carefully reasoned explanation of how well the economy was doing under his watch, he proceeded to alienate those most close to him and his administration: key liberal commentators in the media.

For instance, Niall Stanage and Amie Parnes, [writing for The Hill](#), noted that “Obama is asking for patience on the economy ... and he is doing so in the wake of three ‘wave’ elections in a row, in 2006, 2008, and 2010.” Those elections showed American voters’ impatience at the pace of the recovery, yet all the President could do was reiterate that it’s going to take more time for his measures and actions to kick in. They specifically noted Obama’s determination to claim that “this time it’s different.” Noted the president:

This was not your normal recession. Throughout history, it has typically taken countries up to 10 years to recover from financial crises of this magnitude. Today, the economies of many European countries still aren’t growing.

Obama failed to note, however, that the recession of 1920-21 was every bit as severe as the current downturn, but primarily because of government inaction (except to reduce spending significantly), the economy rebounded [within 18 months](#). Dana Milbank, political analyst for the predictably pro-Obama *Washington Post*, [pointed out the many falsehoods](#) the president expressed in his remarks in Cleveland, calling his speech “a falsehood wrapped in a fallacy.” He explained:

The falsehood is that he has been serious about cutting government spending. The fallacy is that this election will be some sort of referendum that will break the logjam in Washington....

Despite his claim that “both parties have laid out their policies on the table,” Obama has made no serious proposal to fix the runaway entitlement programs that threaten to swamp the government’s finances....

Of more concern is Obama’s nonsensical claim that he has a deficit plan that would strengthen Medicare for the long haul.

[Instead] he has called for doubling Medicare spending over the next 10 years, to nearly \$1 trillion in 2022.

Perhaps the most damning criticism of Obama’s Cleveland speech came from one of the President’s most ardent supporters: *Newsweek*’s Jonathan Alter, author of the highly enthusiastic book [The Promise: President Obama, Year One](#), which *Investor’s Business Daily* called “sycophantic in the extreme,” who said that the president’s performance last week was “one of the worst speeches I’ve ever heard Barack Obama make.”

As the economy continues to fail to respond to the Obama administration’s efforts to revive it, time is running out for the president. [One former administration official put it this way](#): “If this is about patience, we lose. We have to make this election about how far we’ve come and is the president genuinely giving it everything he’s got.”



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The big problem facing the president is that there's not much to shout about. As Republican strategist Rick Wilson put it:

The American people had patience for three long years. They're done extending [Obama any more] credit. And there are fewer bright spots in the last few economic reports that can be spun into anything positive.

What the average American has known for years is finally sinking into the consciousness of those who love him.

That love is ending.



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