

United States of America

Goodbye to Barack Obama's world

It is the failing of liberal technocrats to think reason governs how people act

It was tempting to believe history had turned a page. Alas, posterity may see Barack Obama's 2008 election as a detour from the path an angry America took after 9/11. Mr Obama called for an [open dialogue](#) with the Muslim world. Donald Trump and his team have all but [declared war](#) on Islam. Mr Obama believed there was no problem that could not be salvaged by reason. Mr Trump has opposite instincts. Whatever precise form Mr Trump's administration takes, we know this: Mr Obama's legacy will be purged. In many cases all it will take is the stroke of Mr Trump's [pen](#).

The Obama erasure will go far deeper than undoing domestic laws, or foreign deals. [Mr Trump](#) will repeal Obamacare, or alter it beyond recognition. He will "keep an open mind" about whether to pull the US out of the Paris agreement on climate change and quite probably blow up the US-Iran nuclear deal. These acts would undo Mr Obama's most visible achievements. Less obvious ones, such as the ban on Arctic drilling and enhanced interrogation techniques and the intention of closing Guantánamo Bay (never completed) will also be consigned to the dustbin. It will be as if Mr Obama was never here.

The bizarre thing is that the same America which elected Mr Trump is already missing Mr Obama. This often happens to outgoing presidents. But in Mr Obama's case it is unusually sharp. At 55 per cent his [job approval](#) is equivalent to Ronald Reagan's at the same point, and ahead of Bill Clinton's. It is more than 20 points higher than George W Bush's. The more Mr Trump tweets from the gut, the more Americans appreciate Mr Obama's calm weighing of pros and cons. "No drama Obama" is even making the case that Mr Trump be given a chance to succeed. "I think nothing is the end of the world until it is the end of the world," he told the [New Yorker](#).

Yet it is the end of the world as Mr Obama knew it. He must take some responsibility for its demise. He took office at a moment when the US-led global order was in the balance. Mr Bush's ill-planned wars in Iraq and Afghanistan had shredded America's standing in the Middle East and beyond. The financial crisis of 2008 had brought the US-created "Washington consensus" of free market orthodoxy into possibly terminal disrepute. America's power was in decline but it was not too late to do something about it.

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Mr Obama took office at a geopolitical inflection point. As he prepares to leave, few any longer dispute the fact of relative US decline. For all his high aspirations, Mr Obama was unable to stop the process. Can Mr Trump reverse it? One of Mr Obama's core traits is to believe that reason governs how people act. It is the perennial failing of liberal technocrats to suppose human affairs are settled by rational argument. When people failed to see the merits of the case — whether Republican legislators, or foreign leaders — Mr Obama would retreat into injured silence.

The world has been a disappointment to Mr Obama. When Vladimir Putin's Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, John Kerry, the outgoing secretary of state, said: "You just don't in the 21st century behave in a 19th-century fashion by invading another country on [a] completely trumped up pretext." But that is how the world often operates. The US had done just that to Iraq in the 21st century.

America tends to choose presidents whose personalities are the opposite of their predecessors. Mr Obama, the reasoner, replaced Bush the decider. Mr Trump is a pure bluffer. Much like one of his property deals, Mr Trump will cajole, bully, flatter, and bribe whomever he is dealing with. When he fails — which he surely must — he will declare it a success

and divert people's attention. That is what his outrageous tweets are about. When people tell the truth about him, he will call them liars. When they praise him, he will call them geniuses. When a crisis strikes, he will gamble from the gut. Buyers' remorse will grip the US public. Mr Obama's post-presidential approval ratings are likely to stay up.

But Mr Trump will not reverse America's relative decline. The chances are he will drastically accelerate it. The global role that Mr Obama inherited — and tried, to some degree, to uphold — is now in tatters. It would be hard to overstate the epochal significance of [Mr Trump's election](#). The US-led international order as we knew it for 70 years is over. The era of great power politics is back. An ebullient Russia, led by the strongman Putin, and an increasingly confident China, led by the strongman Xi Jinping, will deal with a wounded America led by strongman Trump. The long-term trajectory is towards China. But the short-term drama will focus on Mr Trump's dealings with Mr Putin. How they play out is anybody's guess. But it will not be pretty. [Europe will be the loser](#). So too will American prestige.

Mr Obama, meanwhile, will settle down to his memoirs. If the past is any guide, they will be beautifully written. Here was a highly intelligent leader, and a fundamentally decent one, who strived to make the case for international co-operation to a world that was not really listening. Mr Obama came bearing hope. He leaves warning against fear. But the world's attention has wandered. People are highly fearful — and rightly so.

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[FT]「オバマ大統領の世界」にさようなら

歴史のページが1枚めくられたと考えるのは、心をそそられることだった。悲しいかな、後世は2008年のバラク・オバマ氏の米大統領選出を、「9.11」の同時テロ後に怒れる米国が取った進路から少しそれただけの回り道と見なすかもしれない。

オバマ氏はイスラム世界との開かれた対話を呼びかけ、ドナルド・トランプ氏と同氏のチームは、事実上、イスラム教に宣戦布告した。オバマ氏は理性で癒やせない問題は存在しないと考えた。トランプ氏は、その反対の本能を抱いている。



最後の外遊を終え大統領専用機に乗るオバマ米大統領(18日) = dpa・AP

トランプ氏の政権が正確にどんな形を取るにせよ、一つ、分かっていることがある。オバマ氏のレガシー(遺産)は消されることになる。多くの場合、トランプ氏が署名すれば、それで事足りてしまう。

「オバマ抹消」は、国内の法律や外国との協定を取り消すだけでは済まない。トランプ氏はオバマケア(医療保険制度改革法)を撤廃するか、見る影もないほど変えてしまうだろう。気候変動に関するパリ協定から米国を離脱させるかどうかについては「予断を持たずに考え」、米国とイランの核合意をかなりの確率で破棄するだろう。

こうした行動で、オバマ氏の最も目立つ成果は帳消しになる。北極圏での石油掘削の禁止やいわゆる強化尋問技術の禁止、グアンタナモ湾の収容所を閉鎖する意思(閉鎖は完了していない)など、それほど目立たない成果もゴミ箱行きだ。まるでオバマ氏が存在しなかったかのような状況になるだろう。

■米国民、オバマ氏を惜しむ

奇妙なのは、トランプ氏を大統領に選んだのと同じ米国が、すでにオバマ氏のことを惜んでいることだ。退任に近い大統領にはよくあることだが、オバマ氏の場合、それが並外れて急激だ。大統領の職務能力を評価する支持率は55%と、任期中の同じ時点でのロナルド・レーガン元大統領と並び、ビル・クリントン元大統領の上を行く。ジョージ・W・ブッシュ前大統領のそれには20ポイント以上の差をつけている。

トランプ氏が直感であれこれツイートすればするほど、米国民は、問題の是非を冷静に検討するオバマ氏の態度を高く評価する。「ドラマなきオバマ」(注: no drama Obama = 冷静な大統領をからかう表現)は、トランプ氏に成功する機会を与えるべきだとさえ訴えている。オバマ氏は米ニューヨーカー誌に「この世の終わりが来るまで、何事もこの世の終わりではないと思う」と語っている。

だが、オバマ氏が知っている世界は終わりを迎えた。この世界の終焉(しゅうえん)については、同氏は一定の責任を負わなければならない。オバマ氏は、米国主導の世界秩序がどう転んでもおかしくない局面で大統領に就任した。ブッシュ氏が不用意に始めたイラクとアフガニスタンでの戦争は、中東をはじめ世界各地で米国の地位を大きく傷つけた。2008年の金融危機は、自由市場を是とする、米国が生み出した「ワシントン・コンセンサス」(米国主導の経済政策理念)を恐らくは致命的な信用失墜に追い込んだ。米国の力は衰退していたが、何らかの対策を講じるのは、まだ手遅れではなかった。

オバマ氏は地政学的な転換点で大統領に就任した。退任の準備を進めている今、米国の相対的な衰退という事実にも異議を唱える人はもうほとんどいない。大志を抱いていたにもかかわらず、オバマ氏は衰退のプロセスを止めることができなかった。トランプ氏はこれを逆転させられるだろうか。

■世界は理性的な議論で動かない

オバマ氏の核をなす特徴の一つは、理性が人々の行動を左右すると考えることだ。人間の営みは理性的な議論によって決まると思い込むのは、リベラルな実務家が持つ永遠の欠点だ。自分の主張の意義が理解されないとき——相手が共和党の議員であれ、外国の指導者であれ——オバマ氏はむっつりと沈黙の中に引きこもる。

オバマ氏は、世界に失望ばかりさせられた。ウラジーミル・プーチン大統領の率いるロシアが2014年にクリミアを編入したとき、間もなく退任するジョン・ケリー米国務長官は「21世紀に、人は完全にでっち上げられた名目で他国を侵略し、19世紀のように振る舞ったりしないものだ」と述べた。だが世界はしばしばそうやって動く。米国は21世紀に、まさにイラクに対してそれをやったわけだ。

米国は、前任者と反対の個性を持った大統領を選ぶ傾向がある。論理で人を説得するオバマ氏が「決定者」を自任するブッシュ氏を継いだ。トランプ氏は純然たるはったり

屋だ。本人の不動産事業の取引と同じように、トランプ氏は誰を相手にするにせよ、おだて、いじめ、お世辞を言い、買収する。失敗したときには——必ず失敗するはずだ——トランプ氏は成功したと宣言し、世間の関心をよそへそらす。それこそがトランプ氏の言語道断なツイートの目的だ。人々がトランプ氏について真実を語ると、彼らを嘘つき呼ばわりする。同氏を称賛すると、天才と呼ぶ。危機に見舞われたときには、直感で賭けに出る。間違った選択をしてしまった後悔が米国民を襲うだろう。オバマ氏の大統領退任後の支持率は高止まりする可能性が高い。

■大国政治の時代が戻ってきた

トランプ氏は米国の相対的衰退をくつがえせない。むしろ衰退をひどく加速させる可能性のほうが高い。オバマ氏が前任者から引き継ぎ、ある程度は守ろうとした米国の世界的な役割は、今やボロボロだ。トランプ氏の大統領選出の画期的な意義を誇張するのは難しい。過去 70 年間にわたって我々が知っていた形の米国主導の国際秩序は終わった。大国政治の時代が戻ったのだ。

ストロングマン(強権的な指導者)のプーチン氏が率いる威勢のいいロシアと、ストロングマンの習近平国家主席が率いる自信を深める中国が、ストロングマンのトランプ氏の率いる傷ついた米国を相手にする。長期的な軌道は中国へと向かう。だが、短期的には、トランプ氏とプーチン氏の折衝が目玉となる。どんな展開になるかは、誰にも分からない。だが、きれいなものにはならない。欧州は敗者になる。米国の名声も同様だ。

一方で、オバマ氏は回顧録に取り組むことになる。過去が何らかの指針になるとすれば、それは美しく書かれるだろう。ここに、極めて知性の高い指導者、根本的にまっとうな指導者がいた、そしてまともに話を聞かない世界に向かって国際協力の重要性を説くことに尽力した、と。

オバマ氏は希望を持ってやって来た。そして恐怖心に対して警鐘を鳴らして去っていく。だが、世界の関心はそれってしまった。人々はひどくおびえている——それも当然だろう。

By Edward Luce

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Barack Obama

Obama urges Trump to regard US as an ‘indispensable nation’

President used his final public event abroad to call on successor Republican businessmen to bolster international order it helped to create

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NOVEMBER 21, 2016

by: [Shawn Donnan](#) and [Andres Schipani](#) in Lima

US President Barack Obama wrapped up his final official trip abroad with a call for his successor Donald Trump to live up to America’s responsibility as an “indispensable nation” in the world, and to bolster the international order it had helped create.

Amid fears that Mr Trump’s election victory on the back of a populist anti-internationalist wave could lead to a US pullback from its leadership role in the world, the outgoing president called for his successor to embrace the gravity of the American presidency.

“The United States really is an indispensable nation in our world order,” Mr Obama told reporters at the conclusion of the 21-country Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Peru.

Mr Obama has spent most of his past week’s travels to Europe and Peru reassuring allies that Mr Trump’s election would not bring an abrupt change in US policy despite the Republican’s campaign pledges to take an “America First” approach to foreign and economic policy. Mr Trump has promised to rip up or renegotiate [trade](#) agreements and pull the US out of other treaties such as the recent Paris climate agreement.

“You can’t assume that the language of campaigning matches up with the specifics of governing,” Mr Obama said on Sunday.

The world, he said, was healthier, wealthier and freer as a result of the US-led liberal order established at the end of the second world war. And “while we all share responsibility for improving that order” only the US is now in a position to carry the burden of leadership, he said.

“We are not going to be able to handle every problem, but the American president and the United States of America, if we’re not on the side of what’s right, if we’re not making the argument and fighting for it ... then it collapses,” he said. “There’s nobody to fill the void.”

While [China](#) had played a role in pulling together the Paris agreement, it had not done what the US had in corralling 200 nations into signing the deal, Mr Obama said. Mr Trump has called climate change a “hoax” invented by China to gain economic advantage and vowed to pull the US out of the deal.

Likewise, “[Russia](#) is a very significant military power,” Mr Obama said, “but they’re not worrying right now about how to rebuild after a hurricane in Haiti. We are.”

Mr Obama’s call came at the end of a summit which saw China’s Xi Jinping tout [Beijing’s role](#) as the new leading advocate for free trade in the Asia-Pacific in the wake of Mr Trump’s election.

Mr Obama has made the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact, which includes Japan and 10 other economies but not China, the economic heart of his “pivot” to Asia, a strategic attempt to reassert US leadership in the region.

But Mr Trump’s opposition to the deal and the reluctance of even pro-trade Republicans in Congress to defy the incoming president has killed the prospects of US ratification any time soon.

“TPP is a plus for America’s economy, America’s workers, American jobs ... and not moving forward would undermine our position across the region,” Mr Obama said.

Mr Obama said he would give Mr Trump the space he needed to form an administration and set his agenda. But he stopped short of promising not to criticise his successor as has been the custom in the past.

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