

The Washington Post

100 DAYS

President Obama's
First Months in Office

DATE ON WHICH MICHELLE OBAMA WORE A J. CREW ENSEMBLE TO VISIT 10 DOWNING STREET: **APRIL 1** » TIME THAT DAY BY WHICH J. CREW'S WEB SITE HAD SOLD OUT OF HER CARDIGAN: **10 A.M. EASTERN** » INCREASE IN J. CREW STOCK SINCE JAN. 20: **65%**

MICHELLE OBAMA'S FAVORABLE RATING

IN JUNE '08: **48%**
NOW: **76%**

NUMBER OF AIG FINANCIAL PRODUCTS EMPLOYEES WHO RECEIVED BONUSES OF \$1 MILLION OR MORE: **73** » TOTAL AMOUNT OF BONUSES RECEIVED BY AIG FINANCIAL PRODUCTS EMPLOYEES: **\$165 MILLION** » AMOUNT THEY PLEDGED TO RETURN: **\$50 MILLION**

AGE OF YOUNGEST PERSON APPOINTED BY OBAMA TO A SENIOR WHITE HOUSE POST: **25**
AGE OF THE OLDEST: **65** » AVERAGE AGE: **46**

NUMBER OF APPOINTMENTS CONFIRMED BY THE SENATE: **65**
NUMBER OF CONFIRMABLE POSITIONS REMAINING: **421**

NUMBER OF BANKS THAT HAVE FAILED SINCE OBAMA TOOK OFFICE: **27**
NUMBER THAT FAILED IN ALL OF 2008: **25**

PERCENTAGE OF RONALD REAGAN'S CABINET MEMBERS WHO WERE WHITE: **94** » OF GEORGE H.W. BUSH'S: **82** » OF BILL CLINTON'S: **68** » OF GEORGE W. BUSH'S: **73** » OF OBAMA'S: **55**

PERCENTAGE OF AMERICANS WHO SAID THE NATION WAS MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IN DECEMBER: **15**
PERCENTAGE WHO FEEL THAT WAY NOW: **50**

NUMBER OF FORMER PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL PLAYERS IN OBAMA'S CABINET: **1**

CHANGE IN DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE FROM JAN. 20, 2009: **+1%**
CHANGE FROM JAN. 20, 2008: **-34%**

PERCENTAGE OF ANNOUNCED, NOMINATED OR CONFIRMED OBAMA OFFICIALS WHO WORKED IN THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION: **41**

PERCENTAGE OF U.S. PRESIDENTS SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II WHO HAVE BEEN LEFT-HANDED: **42**
PERCENTAGE OF GENERAL POPULATION THAT IS LEFT-HANDED: **10**

NUMBER OF DAYS GEORGE W. BUSH WAS IN OFFICE BEFORE HE REINSTITATED THE POLICY PROHIBITING INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING FEDERAL FUNDING FROM PERFORMING ABORTIONS: **2**

GROWTH RATE IN THE U.S. ECONOMY IN THE QUARTER BEFORE BILL CLINTON TOOK OFFICE: **+4.5%**

IN THE QUARTER BEFORE GEORGE W. BUSH TOOK OFFICE: **+2.1%**

IN THE QUARTER BEFORE OBAMA TOOK OFFICE: **-6.3%**

NUMBER OF ARTICLES IN MAJOR NEWSPAPERS MENTIONING "PORTUGUESE WATER DOG" OVER THE PAST YEAR: **45**
PERCENTAGE OF THOSE ARTICLES THAT WERE PUBLISHED OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS: **75%**



Obama's First 100 Days

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Explore the key moments in Obama's presidency in an interactive graphic and timeline.

This digital newsbook was produced for The Washington Post at the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute in Columbia, Missouri.

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ARTICLE 1

First Published: April 26, 2009

Obama Off to Solid Start, Poll Finds

By JON COHEN AND JENNIFER AGIESTA

ARTICLE 2

First Published: April 26, 2009

A Hundred Anxious Days

By ELI SASLOW

ARTICLE 3

First Published: April 29, 2009

Bruised by Stimulus Battle, Obama Changed His Approach To Washington

By SCOTT WILSON

ARTICLE 4

First Published: April 29, 2009

How It Came Down to This: 244 Democrats, 0 Republicans

By PERRY BACON JR.

MORE ▶▶

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ARTICLE 5

First Published: April 29, 2009

From the Start, Putting a Bold Stamp on the White House

By DAN BALZ

ARTICLE 6

First Published: April 29, 2009

Is FDR-Era Yardstick Still Relevant?

By PHILIP RUCKER

ARTICLE 7

First Published: April 29, 2009

What Historians Say

ARTICLE 8

First Published: April 29, 2009

Communicator in Chief Has A Tone for Every Situation

By ALEC MACGILLIS

ARTICLE 9

First Published: April 29, 2009

Making Themselves At Home Beyond the White House Walls

By RICHARD LEIBY

Obama Off to Solid Start, Poll Finds

*But Release of Memos on Detainee Interrogations
Reveals Deep Partisan Split*

By JON COHEN AND JENNIFER AGIESTA

First Published: April 26, 2009

BARACK OBAMA'S performance in the first 100 days of his presidency draws strong public approval in a new Washington Post-ABC News poll, but there is decidedly less support for his recent decision to release previously secret government memos on the interrogation of terrorism suspects, an initiative that reveals deep partisan fissures.

Overall, the public is about evenly divided on the questions of whether torture is justifiable in terrorism cases and whether there should be official inquiries into any past illegality involving the treatment of terrorism suspects. About half of all Americans, and 52 percent of independents, said there are circumstances in which the United States should consider employing torture against such suspects.



BY BILL O'LEARY — THE WASHINGTON POST

The president's setbacks have included missteps on nominations and faltering attempts at bipartisanship.

Barely more than half of all poll respondents back Obama's April 16 decision to release the memos specifying how and when to employ specific interrogation techniques. A third "strongly oppose" that decision, about as many as are solidly behind it. Three-quarters of Democrats said they approve of the action, while 74 percent of Republicans are opposed; independents split 50 to 46 percent in favor of the decision.

The release of the documents, which was fiercely debated at high levels within the government, met with quick fire from former vice president Richard B. Cheney, who said last week that companion memos showing the "success of the effort" should be declassified as well, arguing that the methods had "been enormously valuable in terms of saving lives, preventing another mass casualty attack against the United States."

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, who served in the same position in George W. Bush's administration, supported the release of the documents but said it made him "quite concerned with the potential backlash in the Middle East and in the theaters where we are involved in conflict — that it might have a negative impact on our troops."

Americans also split about evenly on whether the new administration should investigate whether the kind of treatment meted out to terrorism suspects under the Bush administration broke laws, with 51 percent in favor of such inquiries and 47 percent in opposition. About seven in 10 Democrats support such action; a similar proportion of Republicans opposes it. As a candidate, Obama said: "I would not want my first term consumed by what was perceived on the part of the Republicans as a partisan witch hunt, because I think we've got too many problems to solve."

The lukewarm response to Obama's actions on this front stand in stark contrast to his high ratings on handling terrorism and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most of those polled said that, in general, his policies had either made the country safer from terrorism (32 percent) or not made much of a difference either way (43 percent).

Obama's overall rating remains high, with 69 percent of Americans approving of his job performance. He gets solid marks for his handling of the economy, maintaining a better-than-2-to-1 advantage over congressional Republicans on the issue. Majorities said that Obama has exceeded their ex-

pectations in his first three months in office, has accomplished big things and has kept his main campaign promises. Further, public optimism about the economy and the country's direction also remain on the rise since his election, even as few think his major economic initiatives have moved the needle on the nation's flagging economy, their communities or their finances.

Two-thirds of those polled approve of how Obama is handling international affairs in general, up slightly from last month, just before he embarked on his first European trip. Majorities of Americans also approve of how he is handling health care, global warming, taxes and Cuba, four areas in which the administration has tried to stake new ground in its first few months.

But Obama receives less glowing reviews on his handling of the burgeoning federal budget deficit and on immigration issues, where he is at the 50 percent mark, and he gets a negative rating on how he has dealt with the big U.S. automakers.

Beyond specific policy areas, Obama continues to get high personal favorability ratings across a range of attributes. Overall, 72 percent of Americans have a favorable impression of the new

president, down slightly from the eve of his inaugural but far higher than it was during the 2008 campaign. It is also about double Bush's favorability rating when he left office in January (37 percent) and above where Bill Clinton's was at this stage in 1993 (59 percent).

Nearly two-thirds said Obama has accomplished "a great deal" or "a good amount" in his first three months in office. In a Post-ABC poll at the 100-day mark in Clinton's first term, 37 percent said he had done that much. A majority, 54 percent, also said Obama had exceeded their expectations, significantly more than had said so of Clinton or Bush at the outset of their first terms.

Six in 10 Americans said Obama has kept most of his major campaign assurances, although most said he has not reduced the amount of political partisanship in Washington, as he had pledged to do. At the same time, 90 percent said he is willing to listen to different points of view, and close to two-thirds, 63 percent, said he has brought needed change to Washington.

About three-quarters of Americans see Obama as a "strong leader," as "honest and trustworthy," as empathetic and as someone who can be trusted in a crisis. Six in 10 said he is in sync

