

| Comment on the following document | EAE 0422 A | |
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| Robert Gates, Commencement Address, Notre Dame University, May 22, 2011. https://news.nd.edu/news/robert-gates-commencement-address/ | Code Sujet | CCV B1 |
| | Sujet Jury | |
| | Sujet Candidat | |

5 [...] If history – and religion – teach us anything, it is that there will always be evil in the world, people bent on aggression, oppression, satisfying their greed for wealth and power and territory, or determined to impose an ideology based on the subjugation of others and the denial of liberty to men and women. More perhaps than any other Secretary of Defense, I have been a strong advocate of soft power – of the critical importance of diplomacy and development as fundamental components of our foreign policy and national security. But make no mistake, the ultimate guarantee against the success of aggressors, dictators, and terrorists in the 21st century, as in the 20th, is hard power –the size, strength, and global reach of the United States military.

10 Beyond the current wars, our military credibility, commitment, and presence are required to sustain alliances, to protect trade routes and energy supplies, and to deter would-be adversaries from making the kind of miscalculations that so often lead to war.

All of these things happen mostly out of sight and out of mind to the average American, and thus are taken for granted. But they all depend on a properly armed, trained and funded American military, which cannot be taken for granted.

15 To be sure, a strong military cannot exist without a strong economy underpinning it. At some point fiscal insolvency at home translates into strategic insolvency abroad. As part of America getting its financial house in order, the size of our defense budget must be addressed. That means culling more bureaucratic excess and overhead, taking a hard look at personnel levels and costs, and reexamining missions and capabilities to separate the desirable or optional from the essential. But throughout this process we should keep in mind historian Donald Kagan’s observation that the preservation of peace depends upon those states seeking that goal having both the preponderant power and the will to accept the burdens and responsibilities required to achieve it. And we must not forget what Winston Churchill once said, that “the price of greatness is responsibility... the people of the United States cannot escape world responsibility.”

25 One of the great women of American history, Abigail Adams, wrote her son, John Quincy Adams, during the war of the American Revolution. She wrote: “These are the times in which a genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life, or the repose of a pacific station that great characters are formed... Great necessities call out great virtues.”

30 We live in such a time of “great necessities.” For my entire life the United States has been the most economically dynamic, powerful country and government in the world. The indispensable nation. It still is all those things, and indeed, as I’ve traveled the world over the last four and a half years, I have been struck by the number of countries – from Europe to Southeast Asia – who want to forge closer ties with our military, and want the United States to play a bigger, not smaller, role as partners providing stability, security and prosperity across the globe. But there is no question that our ability to lead, and our economic strength – a given for nearly three quarters of a century – are being tested by fiscal problems at home and rising powers and emergent threats abroad. Your lives will be defined by how we respond to these challenges. [...]

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| Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on the Economy in Parma, Ohio," The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, September 8, 2010. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2010/09/08/remarks-president-economy-parma-ohio | Code Sujet | CCV B2 |
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[...] You know, in the fall of 2008, one of the last rallies of my presidential campaign was right here in the Cleveland area. [*Applause.*] It was a hopeful time, just two days before the election. And we knew that if we pulled it off, we'd finally have the chance to tackle some big and difficult challenges that had been facing this country for a very long time.

5 We also hoped for a chance to get beyond some of the old political divides — between Democrats and Republicans, red states and blue states — that had prevented us from making progress. Because although we are proud to be Democrats, we are prouder to be Americans — [*applause*] — and we believed then and we believe now that no single party has a monopoly on wisdom.

That's not to say that the election didn't expose deep differences between the parties.

10 I ran for President because for much of the last decade, a very specific governing philosophy had reigned about how America should work: Cut taxes, especially for millionaires and billionaires. Cut regulations for special interests. Cut trade deals even if they didn't benefit our workers. Cut back on investments in our people and in our future — in education and clean energy, in research and technology. The idea was that if we just had blind faith in the market, if we let
15 corporations play by their own rules, if we left everyone else to fend for themselves that America would grow and America would prosper.

And for a time this idea gave us the illusion of prosperity. We saw financial firms and CEOs take in record profits and record bonuses. We saw a housing boom that led to new homeowners and new jobs in construction. Consumers bought more condos and bigger cars and better TVs.

20 But while all this was happening, the broader economy was becoming weaker. Nobody understands that more than the people of Ohio. Job growth between 2000 and 2008 was slower than it had been in any economic expansion since World War II — slower than it's been over the last year. The wages and incomes of middle-class families kept falling while the cost of everything from tuition to health care kept on going up. Folks were forced to put more debt on their credit cards and borrow
25 against homes that many couldn't afford to buy in the first place. And meanwhile, a failure to pay for two wars and two tax cuts for the wealthy helped turn a record surplus into a record deficit.

I ran for President because I believed that this kind of economy was unsustainable — for the middle class and for the future of our nation. I ran because I had a different idea about how America was built. [*Applause.*] It was an idea rooted in my own family's story.

30 You see, Michelle and I are where we are today because even though our families didn't have much, they worked tirelessly — without complaint — so that we might have a better life. My grandfather marched off to Europe in World War II, while my grandmother worked in factories on the home front. I had a single mom who put herself through school, and would wake before dawn to make sure I got a decent education. [...]

| Comment on the following document | EAE 0422 A | |
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| Jared Bernstein ¹ , "The Path to Complexity on the Health Care Act", <i>The New York Times</i> (Economix Blog), July 16, 2013. | Code Sujet | CCV B3 |
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In contemplating the one-year delay in the Affordable Care Act's employer penalty, I was reminded that the health care law is an awfully complicated piece of work.

I'm a supporter of the bill, and someone who was working for the administration when health legislation was designed, so let's be clear: the fact that it's complex doesn't mean its implementation is anything like the train wreck that conservative Republicans (and Max Baucus²) like to call it.

In fact, as I read the recent report from the Government Accountability Office on setting up the state exchanges — the most complex part of the bill's implementation — I'd say it's proceeding apace despite train wreckers trying to derail it. I suspect most state exchanges will be up and running on Oct. 1 (the federal government is setting up and will operate most of them), and when you consider the magnitude of this challenge amid the blowback and underfunding of the effort, if I'm even close to correct, that will be a very impressive outcome.

But when the White House announced the delay in the employer penalty, a lot of people pointed out that had the United States gone with a single-payer, Medicare-for-all style system, it wouldn't have had to futz around with Rube Goldberg³ policy structures like that in the illustration below from the Congressional Research Service on the employer penalty.

It's a fair point, and one that took me back to my days of selling the bill out on Pebble Beach, that little strip of land next to the White House where television cameras film administration officials. A typical interview back then (2009-10) would usually involve a reporter asking me to defend the proposed reform and explain why the people should be for it. I cringe to think that I often started out by suggesting that it had the potential to "bend the cost curve" — i.e., slow the unsustainable growth of health costs.

Why cringe? Not because I was wrong — that was a major motivator and the law may already be showing some promise in that critical regard. The cringe is because very few listeners knew what to make of that assertion, and it certainly didn't answer what they really wanted to know, which was, "How is this thing going to affect me and my family?"

That's why being able to say the other line I recall using out there — "If you're happy with your current coverage, this law won't affect you at all" — was so important. And that's also why we're stuck with a lot more complexity than we'd like.

To understand why we are where we are with the Affordable Care Act, it's useful to think about the concept of path dependency, meaning that where you end up is often a function of where you start out. And in the United States, we start out with an employer-based system. Though employers have been shedding coverage, about 58 percent Americans and their families are still covered through their job, down from 68 percent a decade ago (not counting older Americans). Perhaps more importantly, among those with private coverage, a group that the opposition was and is trying to scare about the impact of the law, about 90 percent are covered through their employer.

¹ Jared Bernstein is a senior fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington. He was the Chief Economist and Economic Adviser to Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr between 2009 and 2011.

² Max Baucus was a U.S. Senator from Montana between 1978 and 2014. He was a Democrat.

³ A Rube Goldberg machine is designed to perform a task in a uselessly complicated manner. It was named after cartoonist Rube Goldberg.

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Question au programme :

La Présidence de Barack Obama (2009-2017)

Sujet de leçon :

Discuss the following statement:

“Obama projected an idealized version of America’s promise of economic opportunity through hard work, of a sense of belonging transcending racial and class divisions, and of social solidarity enhanced by enlightened government intervention.”

Anne Daguerre, *Obama’s Welfare Legacy: An Assessment of US Anti-poverty Policies*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2017, p. 3.

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| Code Sujet | LCV B3 |
| Sujet Jury | |
| Sujet Candidat | |

Question au programme :

La présidence de Barack Obama (2009-2017)

Sujet de leçon :

Discuss the following theme:

Reconstruction

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| Sujet Candidat | |

Question au programme :

La présidence de Barack Obama (2009-2017)

Sujet de leçon :

Discuss the following statement:

"Obama's greatest misstep was born directly out of his greatest insight. Only Obama, a black man who emerged from the best of white America, and thus could sincerely trust white America, could be so certain that he could achieve broad national appeal. And yet only a black man with that same biography could underestimate his opposition's resolve to destroy him."

Ta-Nehisi Coates, "My President Was Black", *The Atlantic*, January/February 2017

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| Code Sujet | LCV B9 |
| Sujet Jury | |
| Sujet Candidat | |

Question au programme :

La présidence de Barack Obama (2009-2017)

Sujet de leçon :

Discuss the following statement:

« Tonight the President made more promises that sound good, but won't solve the problems actually facing Americans. We want you to have a better life. The President wants that too. But we part ways when it comes to how to make that happen. »

Cathy McMorris Rodgers, State of the Union response by the Republican Party, January 28, 2014.

<https://www.politico.com/story/2014/01/state-of-the-union-2014-cathy-mcmorris-gop-response-102772>