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**The Politics of Anxiety  
African American Leadership  
By Dr. Ronald Walters, PhD  
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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I guess that it is inevitable in a context which has so many large issues that are unresolved and punishing so many people that anxiety is the culture of the ruling class as much as everyone else. You see it and hear it in the remarks of even well-meaning media commentators and analysts, to such an extent that someone defends the Administration of Barack Obama in the welter of criticism it is a rare occurrence.

Otherwise, the finger-pointing and second-guessing is rife, questioning every move made or rumored and even some that have not been discussed seriously by the White House (such as the prospect of a second Stimulus Package). To purposefully bump it up, this culture of anxiety and criticism is richly mixed by the views of Republicans who wish the Obama administration ill and don't have any good ideas, but who are a convenient source of negative opinion nonetheless.

Thus far, there is not an expert consensus that the Administration is going south, but that appears to be the atmosphere that much of the media is working hard to arrive at, as they are pained by the continuing good favorable rating numbers put up by President Obama's leadership among the American people.

This is strange because when Obama put together his Administration there were ooohs and aaahs about the expertise he had surrounded himself with, especially on the economic front, but now the journalists are the experts and the views of the Administration are suspect because they haven't solved the economic crisis in 50 days. Only TV comedian Jon Stewart tapped into a deadly serious moment when he cussed out folks like CNBC's Jim Cramer who has pilloried the Obama economic team and its moves unmercifully. Lost in the criticism is the almost miraculous passage of the \$787 billion Stimulus package in 30 days and the unleashing of another \$75 billion addressed to the Housing Foreclosure crisis and the third leg of the stool is the work they are doing to address the financial system, getting the banks back into the credit business more robustly.

Critics seem to want an immediate formula to fix the financial crisis in fifty days. But if the administration is to get the fix right, they have to gather data (an operation that alone should take at least a month) that tells them what has happened and something of the scope of it. So, Treasury Secretary Geithner and his colleagues need time. The Administration has also been hampered because it has had to clean up the mess made by the Bush Administration's bad decisions that gave \$350 billion to the banks without any accountability and create a valid solution going forward. Symptomatic of this is the amount of attention being given to developing regulations promoting transparency in the use of these funds for AIG and other financial institutions that are spending the peoples' money like it was their own, having lavish parties, giving themselves big bonuses. This has given Republicans the opportunity to appear to be populist on the side of average people who are angry at the fat cats who are being bailed out while they suffer.

There seems to be a big push to make the criticism of the Obama Administration the rationale for shoving the whole financial mess on to his shoulders, by trying to shorten the honeymoon (as Washington Post columnist David Broder said) he should have with the political establishment in the post-election period.

But folks are just plain wrong when they suggest that the President has too much on his plate. For anyone who knows government, they should know that he hasn't had much of a choice but to use this extraordinary moment that cries out for change on many fronts to crack the Champaign on the bow of many boats and get them moving toward his goals. He has thirteen cabinet agencies and a host of independent agencies to get going. What should he have done, wait to give them their mission until the economic crisis is solved? I think not and people who think that way are either ignorant or suspiciously playing games.

So, lets be clear that much of the criticism is coded opposition against valid objectives such as fixing health care, education, employment, energy, the environment, because those opposed to action on these fronts want a clear shot at stopping them anyway. But the Obama people wisely slipped them into the Stimulus Package.

I was really surprised at billionaire Warren Buffet, a supporter of Barack Obama, recommend to him that he should zero in on the economic crisis "like a laser." Well, where has he been? Even when Obama was only President-Elect during the Transition period he was working on the economic crisis, that leadership created the Stimulus Package and the Home Foreclosure strategy. So, I guess that Buffet, who has also lost billions, feels that Obama should spend his time helping him get his money back rather than forming his entire government.


Finally, the culture of anxiety has gotten so out of hand that even the downward slide in the market was tied to Obama's leadership, but when it went up 600 points the week of March 8 all was quiet. So where is the fairness? Lost in the current psychosis.

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