
From: Mark Mazzetti
Sent: Friday, August 05, 2011 8:13 PM
To: MARIE

this didn't come from me....and please delete after you read. See, nothing to worry about

WASHINGTON

Barack Obama must wonder sometimes if his luck has run out.

Maybe he used it all up in 2008.

"Yes, we can!" has devolved into "Hey, we still might. . ."

"When I said 'change we can believe in,' I didn't say 'change we can believe in tomorrow,'" he told an audience at a Chicago fundraiser Wednesday. "Not 'change we can believe in next week.' We knew this was going to take time, because we've got this big, messy, tough democracy."

True enough, but not FDR-inspiring to a deflated and desperate nation facing a credit downgrade and higher borrowing rates.

Barack Obama blazed like Luke Skywalker in 2008, but he never learned to channel the Force. And now the Tea Party has run off with his light saber.

The dissonance of his promise and his reality is jarring.

When he had power, he didn't use it. He wanted to be a "transformational" president like Ronald Reagan, but failed to understand that Reagan's strategic shows of strength allowed him to keep the whip hand without raising his voice.

And now, just when the high school principal in the Oval Office has been browbeating Congress to help create jobs, he is once more distracted from that task himself, as he tries to save his own job.

He goes to fundraisers to tell people to stick with him, but he seems to be trying to reassure himself.

"I have to admit," he said in Chicago, "I didn't know how steep the climb was going to be."

At the large fundraiser there, he tried to reassure disillusioned liberals about "unfinished business" to help those in need. Later, at a \$35,800-a-head dinner, he defended the unpopular debt package like a fiscal conservative.

The president talks fondly of George Bush senior, just as Bush senior does of him. Obama thinks the elder Bush is a poignant figure because he did the right thing, breaking his tax pledge to fix the deficit, even though he got punished for it with one term.

It is clear that the once cocky Obama is feeling that same poignancy about his own presidency. Left in a giant pickle by the hot-dogging Bush Junior, the president who gloriously made history is now stuck in Sisyphus mode.

He thinks he's doing the right things to crawl out of W.'s mudslide, but he ends up being castigated by the right as a socialist, by the left as a conservative, and by the middle as wobbly.

The one clear-cut, chesty victory that Obama has had may have come too late for a beleaguered public to much care.

When the president is asked what it felt like to kill Osama, he's low-key and modest, even though he personally refocused the mission to capture the 9/11 architect after W. dropped the ball.

He has told people what a thrill it was to meet the Team Six Navy Seals -- and the dog Cairo -- who pulled off the hit, noting that they looked less young and fearsome than he expected, and more like guys working at Home Depot.

But while Obama takes the high road, his aides have made sure there are proxies to exuberantly brag on him.

The White House clearly blessed the dramatic reconstruction of the mission by Nicholas Schmidle in The New Yorker -- so vividly descriptive about the Seals' looks, quotes and thoughts that Schmidle had to clarify after the piece was published that he had not actually talked to any of them.

"I'll just say that the 23 SEALs on the mission that evening were not the only ones who were listening to their radio communications," Schmidle said, answering readers' questions in a live chat, after taking flak for leaving some with the impression that he had interviewed the heroes when he wrote in his account that it was "based on their recollections."

The White House is also counting on the Kathryn Bigelow and Mark Boal movie version of the killing of bin Laden to shore up Obama's growing reputation as ineffectual. The Sony film by the Oscar-winning pair who made "The Hurt Locker" will no doubt reflect the president's cool, gutsy decision against shaky odds. Just as Obamaland was hoping, the movie is scheduled to open on October 12, 2012 -- perfectly timed to give a home-stretch boost to a campaign that has grown tougher.

The moviemakers are getting top-level access to the most classified mission in history from an administration that has tried to throw more people in jail for leaking classified information than the Bush administration.

It was clear that the Obama administration had outsourced the job of manning up the president's image to Hollywood when Boal got welcomed to the upper echelons of the Pentagon and showed up recently -- to the surprise of some military officers -- at a C.I.A. ceremony celebrating the hero Seals.

Just like W., Obama is going for that "Mission Accomplished" glow (without the suggestive harness.) At least in this president's case, though, something has been accomplished.

From: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, August 05, 2011 8:13 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Any word??

Ok thanks - keep me posted. I really appreciate it.

Marie E. Harf
CIA Spokesperson
[redacted]

----- Original Message -----
From: Mazzetti, Mark [redacted]
Sent: Friday, August 05, 2011 08:06 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Any word??

Going to see a version before it gets filed. My sense is there is a very brief mention at bottom of column about CIA ceremony, but that Boal also got high level access at Pentagon

----- Original Message -----
From: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, August 05, 2011 08:04 PM
To: Mazzetti, Mark
Subject: Any word??

Marie E. Harf
CIA Spokesperson
[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, August 05, 2011 8:14 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Any word??

He also got good access at the WH btw...

Marie E. Harf
CIA Spokesperson

[redacted]

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From: Mazzetti, Mark [redacted]
Sent: Friday, August 05, 2011 08:06 PM
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