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TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC"

OBAMA: DONE MUCH! ACHIEVED LITTLE!



By Stephen L. Bakke  January 15, 2016

Here's what provoked me:

An opinion writer wrote an adoring and glowing account of Obama and his presidency. Yet at the same time he made a curious admission. I thought I should try to point it out to the readers.

Here's my response:

Obama: Done Much! Achieved Little!

On Jan. 14 Stephen Marche wrote glowingly about Obama in "The left after Obama: data and dreams." He recounts a few actual accomplishments, as well as "pretend" successes like the unemployment rate (he ignores the all-important "labor participation rate" which is at a 30+ year low) and healthcare reform (he doesn't acknowledge the grim comparison of meager results to majestic original goals). He bemoans the impossibility of repeating these successes even if Clinton or Sanders becomes president.

For Marche, the days of glory are over: "...progressive America will have to live without its biggest winner. The magnitude of Obama's achievements provoke a unique type of political despair...what hope can there be to solve the problems that have not just continued but grown in ferocity." Of course the cause of this despair is laid directly on conservatives because to attribute it to Obama would be to tarnish a perfect record: "Americans elected a black man as their leader, and the fascinated loathing of black flesh – America's definitive cultural undercurrent – kept right on going."

In spite of Obama's near perfection, Marche's introductory statement, followed by his despair, is very telling. It's almost as if this commentary was a waste of time. He wrote: "He's achieved so much. And yet all the biggest problems have only gotten worse." Considering that admission, Marche should consider whether his adoration is really an empty wish.

Rather than "achieving much," a more accurate summary would be: "Obama has done much, but achieved very little!"