



The New President

With the inauguration of Barack Obama in January, that “other America” was back — the one that is politically liberal, Keynesian in economic policy, committed to improving health care in the U.S., concerned about global warming, and open to collaboration with the rest of the world. What a change after eight years of “we know what’s best for you.”

The new president is intelligent, reads and writes books, knows how to listen, exercises firm leadership, has taught constitutional law, and is eloquent in his use of English. Yes, change has definitely come to Washington.

Make no mistake about it, however, Barack Obama’s is an American story, and his policies and leadership, as shown in the first two months of his presidency, are thoroughly American. His family, for example, is culturally diverse — black, white, Indonesian, Kenyan, and Kansan. Is this not the essence of the United States, the melting pot?

More significantly, he made his way up from unpromising circumstances by hard work, discipline, and a willingness to tackle tough problems. A story-book success story, American style. We Americans believe we are individuals who take responsibility for our own destinies and can solve any problems by just getting down to work and taking decisive action.

Obama’s success as president will undoubtedly be determined by how well the country emerges from the present economic crises. In the coming *Letters*, we will look at some of the issues being discussed and see how they, and the Obama’s handling of them, reflect the American way of doing things.

In the meantime, here’s a tip: Obama is good for your English, and that goes for all of us, Americans and Germans. Try his recent address to Congress for a start. I’ll send you a copy if you like.

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