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Is The World Safer Under Obama?

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As if the hot Toronto weather is not enough to enjoy, there was a more heated debate in the city. Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies [hosted](#) a gala event -- the Spirit of Hope Gala Benefit -- to benefit the organization's advocacy, human rights and outreach efforts here in Canada and abroad.

In the much anticipated event, there was a debate by distinguished Americans on the resolution "Be it resolved, the world is safer under President Obama." The moderator for the event was CNN's chief political analyst, Gloria Borger. Joining the esteemed panel would be one-time Al Gore campaign manager Donna Brazile, senior Clinton strategist James Carville versus one time Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee and George Bush strategist Karl Rove.

Just over four years ago, like many Canadians, I went to the United States to [volunteer](#) for the then-Illinois senator Barack Obama and his historic presidential campaign. I was intrigued by his biography as much as I was by his youthful energy. Like most Americans and much of the world -- his foreign policy objectives were vague, yet the idea of change was too much to ignore. In his trademark speeches, he talked of peace, justice and human rights. These were the hallmarks of America at her best -- the very best country in the world I thought.

The candidate had promised a speedy exit from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars that has killed thousands and destroyed the lives of millions. Today, Americans are still in both countries and countless lives are still being lost including those of Americans.

In Africa, it was hoped that the new president, who is partly African, would help solve the issue of poverty that has caused misery to millions of Africans in war and famine. It was hoped that the continent would finally get a much needed partner instead of being a

dumping place for the world's sympathy and charity via a new free and fair trade agreement, much like what Latin America is experiencing today. That has not happened.

As long as Africa is concerned, no American president, including Barack Obama, comes close to achievement of the great legacy of President George W. Bush. As president, Bush pumped \$18 billion into fighting HIV/AIDS in the continent, potentially saving millions of Africans. He endorsed a plan to cancel \$34 billion worth of debt for 27 African states to help them focus on recovery initiatives. His Malaria initiative has seen the disease halved in 15 African countries. He also led the international community in declaring that the atrocities in Darfur amounted to genocide.

A new book published by the Obama-friendly Brookings Institute [*Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy*](#) focuses on the successes and failures of the Obama administration.

It noted how Obama was strong "on major and pressing foreign policy challenges -- counter terrorism policy, including the daring raid that eliminated Osama bin Laden; the "reset" with Russia; managing the increasingly significant relationship with China; and handling the rogue states of Iran and North Korea."

It continued -- "on Policy on resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, has reflected serious flaws in both strategy and execution. Afghanistan policy has been plagued by inconsistent messaging and teamwork. On important 'softer' security issues-- from energy and climate policy to problems in Africa and Mexico--the record is mixed. As for his early aspiration to reshape the international order, according greater roles and responsibilities to rising powers, Obama's efforts have been well conceived but of limited effectiveness".

In the four years, Barack Obama has been President; he had traveled the world giving many inspiring speeches that makes him sound more like a motivational speaker rather than President. For instance in Ghana - he spoke of Africa that is not as a world apart. "I see Africa as a fundamental part of our interconnected world - as partners with America on behalf of the future that we want for all our children".

These are beautiful inspiring poetic words yet still no Obama legacy in the rich continent.

The world does not know of the Obama doctrine nor has he distinguished himself in international affairs in the years he has been president. There is a rumor that might come in his second and final term.

As Jimmy Carter experienced abruptly in 1980, that might not come handy to the Democrat President in the upcoming election. He is no longer the "new" candidate with great hope and promise. So again, is the world better off under President Barack Obama?

I do not know yet. Like the President, it might take four years to help me understand the Obama doctrine. That is - if there was one to begin with.