

: Obama is a "new age" leader

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More than 100 days after America encountered its greatest environmental disaster, what can be said about President Obama's leadership throughout this tumultuous time? His critics will tell you that he failed to show direct leadership presence; that he was too slow to act, too professorial and depending on which voice you listen to, he was either too tough or not tough enough on the oil giant.

This writer sees things from a different perspective. Looking more closely, and through the lens of sustainable leadership, the president displayed thoughtful calm, shrewd strategic positioning, and prudent action throughout. What we saw in President Obama was a leader who, in the face of immense pressure, both political and fundamental, facing a crisis with multi-layered competing priorities and impacts, was able to step back and examine the big picture — the convoluted implications of what we were truly facing. As he worked to address the Gulf oil disaster, Obama demonstrated that he is not one to be rattled into knee-jerk reactions, political or otherwise.

He is rather a leader who can be counted on to stand firm and approach problems, issues and crisis with keenly integrated foresight, "no stone left unturned" planning and steadfast bottom lines. Obama attacked this crisis with a right brain holistic and deliberate focus. He looked first at the scope of the matter. He then called attention to the gap between where we were and where we needed to be. He did not succumb to an easier quick-fix track, but demanded next level solutions that would leave us protected from future spills, or at the very least, better able to handle such a crisis should it occur again.

He then engaged all those who were part of the problem, along with those who could contribute to a solution; a diverse collaborative think tank of subject matter experts from industry, science, the military, and government. He demanded of that group open, accurate and innovative thought. Obama's left brain inclinations then kicked in to require plans that were complete, transparent, responsible and effective.

Look closely at this leader. He is different than what we are use to — different in a good way, and as such, we have much to learn from him.

As Obama continues to address the fallout from this disaster, he is a leader we can count on to see this and all matters through. Moving forward, the president will foremost take into account the impacts on our future and on humanity. Considering not only the Gulf oil disaster, but all of the challenges we are facing, we are no doubt at a critical juncture. We can no longer live by singular motives or moment-to-moment gain. We need to operate more according to a long-range view; to better reflect on complex inter-relationships and impacts between and among our approaches and actions.

Obama's leadership approach is foundational to just that kind of deliberation. As such, the president is moving us toward the changes we ultimately require. He is moving us from a reactive culture to one that demands the sustainable. In his handling of the Gulf oil catastrophe, President Obama has demonstrated that he is a new-age leader who can and will help us to address our much needed course correction.

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