

THE 2012 AGENDA WILL BE AN AGENDA OF CENTRISM



KARLYN BOWMAN is an American political scientist and public opinion analyst. She is currently a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a columnist for Forbes.com.

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The 2012 campaign has already begun but this is not yet visible. American politics is a permanent electoral campaign these days; presidents never stop running for office.

The game of American politics is played in the center of the playing field. The swing from a Bush administration to an Obama administration still remains between the 40-yard lines.

Right now, by far the most important issues are the economy and unemployment. Nothing else comes close in terms of popular concerns of voters, so these issues are what candidates should focus on.

It is still too early to know what the slogans will be for 2012, as it all depends on how the economy is performing. If things are improving, the president will say that his administration helped make such improvements possible. If they are not, the president will urge Americans to stay with him on the course he has set

towards eventual improvement.

One of the concerns about Obama now is that he has increased federal government involvement in the economy too much. There was the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) that bailed out the banks, followed by the bailout of the auto industry, and then the stimulus package. These were all very expensive programs, and **even though Americans initially favored TARP and the stimulus, they now worry that government has grown too much. This is an area of concern for many Americans, and not just conservatives.**

Both the economy and the environment are important issues in America. People think we can have economic growth and protect the environment at the same time. But when times are as difficult for the economy as they are now, employment levels and economic growth are more important to the people. ■

THE WORLD IS FROZEN IN THE EXPECTATION OF CHAOS



JAMES GALBRAITH is an American economist and political scientist. He is currently a professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs and at the Department of Government, University of Texas at Austin.

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At present, **the political agenda, both the American and the international one, is moving neither to the right nor to the left. Instead, it is shifting towards total disorder.** The idea that has been vigorously promoted by the right — namely that the state should not interfere in the financial crisis — happens to be gaining more and more support in the United States. It is becoming increasingly more popular within the greater society. The insanity of this idea is obvious due to the fact that we can now say for sure that, unless the state had interfered in this crisis, it would have resulted in utterly catastrophic consequences. Along with that, American conservatives continue to be very active in trying to discredit the role of the state in the economy. Unless the Obama administration eventually manages to send a clear message to the population that ‘everything is under control’, then having a reasonable political discussion will be becoming an increasingly problematic task to achieve even in the near future.

Economic topics have been the predominant themes during the global economic crisis and they will continue to be

the dominant ones as long as the crisis persists. These topics, first and foremost, concern the United States, Europe and the Russian Federation. This will remain true for the remainder of this year, for 2011 and for 2012. The main task for Barack Obama in 2011–2012 should be formulating the concept, which can bring together and synthesise all of the positive results that he has achieved for the country during the course of his presidency. This is indeed the main challenge that he faces today, because it is becoming apparent that, **although the bankers and the banks have already recovered from the crisis, the majority of the population is still suffering from it.** Of course, the situation may change radically by the official beginning of the election campaign in the USA, and unforeseen circumstances can also make significant corrections to the political agenda. For instance, the financial condition of the economy may improve, and the financial sector may be put in order. This would help Barack Obama tremendously. However, quite the opposite scenario is also possible. ■