

Does President Obama deserve another term?

YES

NO



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New York Times Proves Clint Eastwood Correct -- Obama Is Lousy CEO

A Sunday *New York Times* front page story — *New York Times!* — might have killed President Obama's re-election hopes.

The story is called "[The Competitor in Chief — Obama Plays To Win, In Politics and Everything Else.](#)" It is devastating.

With such a title, and from such a friendly organ, at first I thought Jodi Kantor's piece would be a collection of Obama's greatest political wins: His rapid rise in Illinois, his win over [Hillary Clinton](#) in the 2008 Democratic primaries, the passage of health care, and so on.

But the NYT piece is not about any of that. Rather, it is a deep look into the two outstanding flaws in Obama's executive leadership:

1. How he vastly overrates his capabilities:

“ But even those loyal to Mr. Obama say that his quest for excellence can bleed into cockiness and that he tends to overestimate his capabilities. The cloistered nature of the White House amplifies those tendencies, said Matthew Dowd, a former adviser to President George W. Bush, adding that the same thing happened to his former boss. “There's a reinforcing quality,” he said, a tendency for presidents to think, I'm the best at this.

2. How he spends extraordinary amounts of time and energy to compete in — trivialities.

“ For someone dealing with the world's weightiest matters, Mr. Obama spends surprising energy perfecting even less consequential pursuits. He has played golf 104 times since becoming president, according to Mark Knoller of [CBS News](#), who monitors his outings, and he asks superior players for tips that have helped lower his scores. He decompresses with

card games on [Air Force One](#), but players who do not concentrate risk a reprimand (“You’re not playing, you’re just gambling,” he once told Arun Chaudhary, his former videographer).

His idea of birthday relaxation is competing in an Olympic-style athletic tournament with friends, keeping close score. The 2009 version ended with a bowling event. Guess who won, despite his history of embarrassingly low scores? The president, it turned out, had been practicing in the White House alley.

Kantor’s piece is full of examples of Obama’s odd need to dominate his peers in everything from bowling, cards, golf, basketball, and golf (104 times in his presidency). Bear in mind, Obama doesn’t just robustly compete. The leader of the free world spends many hours *practicing* these trivial pursuits behind the scenes. Combine this weirdly wasted time with a consistent overestimation of his capabilities, and the result is, according to NYT’s Kantor:

“ He may not always be as good at everything as he thinks, including politics. While Mr. Obama has given himself high grades for his tenure in the White House — including a “solid B-plus” for his first year — many voters don’t agree, citing everything from his handling of the economy to his unfulfilled pledge that he would be able to unite [Washington](#) to his claim that he would achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Those were not the only times Mr. Obama may have overestimated himself: he has also had a habit of warning new hires that he would be able to do their jobs better than they could.

“I think that I’m a better speechwriter than my speechwriters,” Mr. Obama told Patrick Gaspard, his political director, at the start of the 2008 campaign, according to *The New Yorker*. “I know more about policies on any particular issue than my policy directors. And I’ll tell you right now that I’m going to think I’m a better political director than my political director.”

Though he never ran a large organization before becoming president, he initially dismissed internal concerns about management and ended up with a factionalized White House and a fuzzier decision-making process than many top aides wanted.

Kantor’s portrait of Obama is stunning. It paints a picture of a CEO who is unfocused and lost.

Imagine, for a minute, that you are on the board of directors of a company. You have a CEO who is not meeting his numbers and who is suffering a declining popularity with his customers. You want to help this CEO recover, but then you learn he doesn’t want your help. He is smarter than you and eager to tell you this. Confidence or misplaced arrogance? You’re not sure at first. If the company was performing well, you’d ignore it. But the company is performing poorly, so you can’t.

With some digging, you learn, to your horror, that the troubled CEO spends a lot of time on — *what the hell?* — bowling? Golf? Three point shots? While the company is going south?

What do you do? You fire that CEO. Clint Eastwood was right. You let the guy go.

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