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Jan. 22, 2010

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Arena Ref: [Fred Barbash](#)

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Will *Citizens United* alter American campaigns and if so, how?

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Roger Pilon

Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

Are the Clinton and Reagan lessons useful for Obama? Sure -- if he paid them any heed. Reagan had a game plan from day one, grounded in reality, and he stuck with it even after the modest but expected electoral set-backs of 1982: Lower taxes, less regulation, and, with those signals, the economy would correct itself, as it did. Clinton was less focused and therefore was able eventually to shift when reality, in the form of the 1994 elections, forced itself upon him: He finally accepted the welfare reform congressional Republicans had crafted, admitted that "the era of big government is over," and the stability that Reagan had secured after the turbulent Carter years continued.

So far, however, there are few signs that Obama will heed such lessons. He's perhaps the most ideologically driven president we've ever had, but his ideology comes out of the left, which means that it clashes with the real world and with the larger part of the American electorate, once they've come to see it in practice. In that respect, in fact, a single example sometimes captures the character of an entire administration. Although there's no shortage of such examples in this case, the eminent historian James Q. Wilson [discusses](#) one such in this morning's [Wall Street Journal](#) -- the administration's decision to try confessed 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and his four al-Qaeda cohorts in a civilian court in downtown Manhattan.

Set aside the profound legal questions that decision has raised -- classified evidence, confrontation rights, finding an impartial jury, speedy-trial rights, protecting witnesses and jurors, pre-trial prejudice (Obama: "when he's convicted and when the death

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penalty is applied to him"; AG Holder: "failure [to convict] is not an option"), procedural compromises needed to convict spilling over to ordinary trials, to cite just a few -- Wilson asks a simple question: Will Washington pay for the terror trials? He starts with the nonmonetary costs, zeroing in on the actual real estate at play in the "inner perimeter" -- the government buildings, churches, apartment buildings, public garages: Everyone who wants to get to one of those, he notes, "will face road blocks, car searches, radiation monitors and pedestrian checks," for the year the trial is expected to last. And the monetary costs, excluding those of the federal government, are estimated to be \$216 million, for a city that has lost over 6,000 officers in recent years due to budget cutbacks. And here's the kicker: The decision to hold this trial not before a military commission on a secure army base but in crowded downtown Manhattan was made with no consultation with city officials.

The indifference to the practical, to say nothing of the legal and political, problems surrounding this decision bespeaks an arrogance that can be explained only by an ideologically driven vision of the world -- an arrogance that in other hands and other centuries has led to human tragedies of incalculable proportions. We're fortunate in America that we have constitutional checks on such power, as we saw yesterday, when the Court put a halt to congressional incumbents' efforts to hobble challengers, and on Tuesday, when the people themselves put a halt to machine politics as usual. So will Obama learn? Not likely, but if he doesn't, we are not without recourse.

Arena Players

Current and Former Elected Officials

Marsha Blackburn	John A. Boehner
Christopher S. 'Kit' Bond	Barbara Boxer
Phil Bredesen	Jeb Bush
John Campbell	Michael B. Coleman
Jim Cooper	John Cornyn
Mario M. Cuomo	Tom Daschle
Rosa DeLauro	Jim DeMint
Manny Diaz	Cal Dooley
Byron Dorgan	Jim Doyle
Mickey Edwards	John Ensign
Victor H. Fazio	Bob Filner
Lee Fisher	Martin Frost
Ettore Greco	Gary Hart
Jeb Hensarling	John Hostettler
Steny H. Hoyer	Mike Johanns
Ted Kaufman	John Kerry
Paul Kirk	Larry LaRocco
Jim Leach	Carl Levin
John Lewis	Trent Lott
Edward Markey	Kevin McCarthy

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The message from MassachusettsWhat now for the Democratic agenda?	Jan. 19, 2010
Open Mic Massachusetts	Jan. 15, 2010
The 2010 race: a Republican House-real shot, long shot or no shot?	Jan. 14, 2010
Has Obama changed the way Washington works? Bonus babies: Are big banker bonuses "ridiculous and offensive," (as Christina Romer says)? What, if anything, should be done about them? Massachusetts: Does the the closer-than-anyone-expected race jeopardize the Democratic agenda?	Jan. 13, 2010
Dear Harold (Ford) Mass. Senate: Is a close call a victory for the GOP? "Game Change": Lessons of a much-hyped book	Jan. 12, 2010
What should happen to: A)Harry Reid B)Michael Steele? Does the news media (aided and abetted) spend way too much time and space "huffing and puffing" about gaffes?	Jan. 11, 2010

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Barbara Mikulski	Thomas Nelson
Randy Neugebauer	Don Nickles
Martin O'Malley	David Orentlicher
Tim Pawlenty	Mike Pence
Paul Ryan	Linda Sanchez
Bernie Sanders	Rick Santorum
Patricia Schroeder	Donna Shalala
Louise Slaughter	Michael S. Steele
Zach Wamp	

Strategists, Scholars and Authors

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Edward Alden	David All
Richard V. Allen	Jeanne Allen
Mike Allen	Anita L. Allen
Whit Ayres	Andrew J. Bacevich
Dean Baker	Ross Baker
Jack M. Balkin	Brad Bannon
Jan Baran	Henri J. Barkey
Randy Barnett	Bruce Bartlett
Gary L. Bauer	Robert Bauer
Daniel F. Becker	Paul Begala
Georges C. Benjamin	Mary Frances Berry
Rick Beyer	David Biespiel
Bill Bishop	Bradley A. Blakeman
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David Boaz	Adam Bonin
Ron Bonjean	Robert L. Borosage
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Anna Burger	Stuart Butler
Bill Buzenberg	Steven G. Calabresi
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Maurice (Mickey) Carroll	James Carville
Guy-Uriel E. Charles	Craig Charney
Andrei Cherny	William Jelani Cobb
Michael A. Cohen	Michele Combs


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Rory Cooper	Chester Crocker
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Katon Dawson	Christina DeConcini
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