

Obama: Global Leadership, Global Responsibility

Piero Bassetti (December 07, 2008)



Barack Obama has mixed the relationship between a political message and the boundaries of the nation in which the message is sent. Has Obama created a global constituency? If so, he is now required to represent it.

In recent weeks there have been comments thrown about, and I would say rightly so, about the broad consensus that Barack Obama has succeeded in garnering among people outside of the United States. Basically, it could be said that Obama has had as a constituency, or even an "electoral territory," not only the United States but the entire world – or at least a part of it.

This observation presents a point to reflect upon. It will be interesting to see if Obama's foreign policy will only serve the interests of the United States or if he will take into consideration the



interests of the vast global constituency that has supported him. Many have said that Obama has understood the Web, specifically virtual space, both as a new medium and as a political device. However, another point was overlooked: cyberspace is also another new electoral constituency.

Barack Obama Berlin Speech (Part 1)

So if the new president of the United States wants to be respectful of his voters, both in the real world and the virtual world, he should not solely concern himself with the United States and its own national interests.

Obama's election demonstrates that today that there is no longer a well-defined border between the constituencies and the range of interests that the candidate must represent. This is due to the fact that the glo-cal age (the global sphere that always intersects with the local one) which is our age, has produced a new kind of people and perhaps is also producing new forms of democratic participation.

In a setting like this, where we discuss *italici* and *italianità*, it would be interesting to consider the opportunities that present themselves to the *italici* today, a new group of people who are entirely global-local. *Italici* could be represented in the United States by Italian-Americans while the United States could be effectively represented in countries where *italici* reside by the *italici* themselves.

In other words, Barack Obama with his election and as president-elect of the United States has not only relegated the lack of fluidity between ethnic groups, but more significantly, he has mixed the relationship between a political message and the boundaries of the nation in which the message is sent.

Has Obama created a global constituency? If so, he is now required to represent it.

(Translated by Giulia Prestia)

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