



## THE TRANSITION TO POWER



U.S. President-elect Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) faces supporters during his election night victory rally in Chicago.

**Obama Transition website – [Change.gov](http://change.gov)** – Office of the President-Elect

**[U.S. Govt. Policy and Supporting Positions \(Plum Book\)2008 / Index / About the Plum Book](#)**

The Plum Book is used to identify President appointed positions within the Federal Government.

**[Prunes Online: A Guide to Presidential Appointments](#)** This non-government website is directed especially to prospective federal appointees as well as to people interested in the Presidential appointment system.

**[New Member Pictorial Directory \(111<sup>th</sup> Congress\)](#)** – photos and brief bio profiles of people newly elected to the U.S. House of Representatives on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2008.

**[Presidential Transition](#)** GSA, November 2008.

**[Ensuring a Smooth and Effective Presidential Transition](#)** *Fact Sheet. White House, 28 October, 2008.*

The *Transition Coordination Council (TCC)* will help ensure that the Administration's efforts are comprehensive and well coordinated. The TCC membership includes the President's Chief of Staff and others with authority and expertise in areas that affect a Presidential transition, as well as senior officials in critical areas such as national security, homeland security, and our economy.

**[2008-2009 Presidential Transitions: National Security Considerations and Options](#)** by John Rollins. *CRS, Library of Congress, 21 April, 2008. 52p.*

The 2008-2009 election marks the first presidential transition in the post-9/11 era, and is of concern to many national security observers. Many observers suggest that the current security climate and recent acts of terrorism by individuals wishing to influence national elections and change foreign policies portend a time of increased risk to the current presidential transition period. The report discusses historical national-security related presidential transition activities, provides a representative sampling of national security issues the next administration may encounter, and offers considerations and options relevant to each of the five phases of the presidential transition period.

**[Presidential Transitions](#)** by Stephanie Smith. *CRS, Library of Congress, 11 February, 2008. 38p.*

Since President George Washington first relinquished his office to incoming President John Adams in 1797, this peaceful transition, symbolizing both continuity and change, has demonstrated the stability of our system of government. Aside from the symbolic transfer of power, an orderly transition from the outgoing Administration to the incoming Administration is essential to ensure continuity in the working affairs of government. Necessary funding for both the incoming and outgoing Administrations is authorized by the *Presidential*

*Transition Act*, as amended. The General Services Administration (GSA) is authorized to provide suitable office space, staff compensation, communications services, and printing and postage costs associated with the transition.

**Presidential Transitions: Issues Involving Outgoing and Incoming Administrations** by L. Elaine Halchin. *CRS, Library of Congress*, 1 November, 2008. 35p.

The smooth and orderly transfer of power can be a notable feature of presidential transitions, and a testament to the legitimacy and durability of the electoral and democratic processes. Yet, at the same time, a variety of events, decisions, and activities contribute to what some may characterize as the unfolding drama of a presidential transition. Inter party transitions in particular might be contentious. Using the various powers available, a sitting President might use the transition period to attempt to secure his legacy or effect policy changes. Some observers have suggested that, if the incumbent has lost the election, he might try to enact policies in the waning months of his presidency that would "tie his successor's hands." On the other hand, a President-elect, eager to establish his policy agenda and populate his Administration with his appointees, will be involved in a host of decisions and activities, some of which might modify or overturn the previous Administration's actions or decisions.

**Testimony Before U.S. House Committee on Government Management, Organization, and Procurement** by Martha Kumar *White House Transition Project*, 24 September, 2008. 10p.

The director, Martha J. Kumar, explains the role of the White House Transition Project.

**Recommendations for Transition Teams** *Project on Government Oversight*, 20 October, 2008. 7p.

Project on Government Oversight's advice includes making agency missions more modern and relevant, protecting inherently governmental functions, improving whistleblower protections, halting the revolving door between the government and the private sector, increasing government transparency, and implementing multiple measures to improve and strengthen contract oversight.

**The Council for Excellence in Government's 2008-2009 Presidential Transition Initiative** *Council for Excellence in Government*, October 2008. 5p.

The non-partisan Council for Excellence in Government is already at work on the critical dimensions of the transition, which officially spans eleven weeks, from Election Day until the new Chief Executive takes the oath of office at noon on January 20, 2009. The planning and management of this historic changing of the guard in the federal government is of vital importance not only to the new President and his team, but also to the American public and the world. The Council offers a variety of resources to the new Administration to help navigate a smooth transition and get its programs, personnel and policies off to a strong start.

**Addressing the 2009 Presidential Transition at the Department of Homeland Security** *National Academy of Public Administration*. June 2008. 135p.

Recent history demonstrates that political transitions present an opportunity for terrorists to take advantage of real or perceived weaknesses in a nation's ability to detect, deter, prevent or respond to attacks. The study focuses on Department of Homeland Security's senior leadership cadre, political appointees and career civil servants, and the department's existing and anticipated plans to make the transition go smoothly.

**Financial Management: Providing a Foundation for Transition** *Association of Government Accountants' Annual CFO Survey*. 2008. 32p.

In 2008, 239 federal financial management executives and managers took part in the 12th annual chief financial officer (CFO) survey sponsored by the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) and conducted by Grant Thornton LLP. The report says that the government must head in a new direction to achieve greater gains. Future improvements need to focus on how the CFO can add value to missions and programs. In the future, the quintessential federal CFO will have a relationship of mutual trust with departmental and agency leaders and be skilled in developing and retaining an effective financial team. Such CFOs will understand the federal budget process, have accounting acumen, know the business information needs of program managers and be skilled in selling a budget to OMB and Congress, internal control to program managers and the benefits of integrated financial and performance information to everyone.



**Getting It Done: A Guide For Government Executives** Mark A. Abramson et al. *IBM Center for Government*, 11 October, 2008. 150p.

This report is written for those who have answered the call to public service. It focuses on the environment in which they will work. Part I contains six "to dos" necessary to "get it done" in Washington. Part II consists of 14 chapters, each describing an important stakeholder in the political environment of Washington.

**The Operator's Manual for the New Administration** *IBM Center for the Business of Govt.* 2008. 194p.

The Manual is written for newly appointed agency heads, those who lead departments, bureaus, or programs, and their senior management teams, consisting of both political and career executives. It is these teams, augmented by an experienced career staff that must navigate the seemingly endless rules and procedures of government. The Manual describes the tools available to new agency heads and their management teams that can assist them in implementing their policy and program objectives.

**Presidential Leadership to Ensure Science and Technology in the Service of National Needs: A Report to the 2008 Candidates** *Center for the Study of the Presidency*, 2008. 31p.

The next President will confront major policy challenges that have essential ingredients of science and technology, the renewal of prosperity for Americans in a changed world, environmental protection, climate change, food and water scarcity, energy, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. According to the authors, the success of the Presidency will likely be determined by his effectiveness in dealing with these great challenges and others yet over the horizon. Now well into the 21st century, science and technology are embedded in every aspect of modern life. Accordingly, cohesive and informed policies and effective policy implementation for these and other complex problems will require marshalling the best science and technology capabilities within the Federal government and throughout the nation.

**Presidential Power in National Security: A Guide to the President Elect** *White House Transition Project, Law Library of Congress*, 3 November, 2008. 16p.

The report explains the effective use of military force and foreign policy initiatives to the building of public understanding, consensus, and acting within the law.

**Roadmap to Reform: A Management Framework for the Next Administration** *Partnership for Public Service*, October 2008. 25p.

Effective government requires effective management. The transition from one presidential administration to the next offers an important opportunity for effective management. To help shape the next president's management framework, a number of leading government reform experts forged a consensus about critical federal workforce management issues and actions our next president should take to improve government operations.

**Serving the Congress and the Nation** *U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)*. November 2008.

Following each presidential election, *U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)* serves as a resource to assist with the transition to a new Congress and administration. On this Web site, using its institutional knowledge and broad-based, nonpartisan work on matters across the government spectrum, GAO provides insight into, and recommendations for addressing, the nation's major issues, risks and challenges.

**Actions for Restoring America** *American Civil Liberties Union*, 27 October, 2008. 97p.

According to ACLU, Barack Obama has become chief executive of a nation that has been greatly weakened in our freedoms, our values, and our international reputation. Presidents have enormous power not only to set the legislative agenda, but also to establish policy by executive order, federal regulation, or simply by refocusing the efforts and emphases of the executive agencies. The report contends that the new president must use all of these tools to restore our freedoms and move the country forward. The report lists many of the actions that the new president could take in order to decisively signal a restoration of American values.

## **Discussion**

**After the Obama Win** William A. Galston, Senior Fellow, Governance Studies, *Brookings*, 9 November.

**In Defense of Caution: Why President Obama Shouldn't Push For Too Much Too Fast** William A.



Galston, *The New Republic*, 4 November.

**The Expanding Role of Government** - William A. Galston, *Beyond the Politics* with Bill Bennett, 11 October.

**Obama Runs First True Campaign of 21st Century** - William A. Galston, *Brookings*, 4 June.

**The Road Ahead: The First 100 Days and Beyond** - Derek Shearer, *Huffington Post*, 18 October.

**The 2008 Presidential and Congressional Elections** - The morning after Barack Obama won a historic nod for the White House and Democrats further solidified control of Congress, Brookings' Darrell West and Thomas Mann offered recommendations for getting the nation back on track (video and transcript).

**RECOMMENDED WEBSITES:**

**The Inauguration** - 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 in Washington D.C.

**Presidential Inaugural Addresses**

**Midnight Rulemaking: Considerations for Congress and a New Administration** CRS, *Library of Congress*, 18 November, 2008.

**Federal Personnel: Conversion of Employees from Appointed (Noncareer) Positions to Career Positions in the Executive Branch** CRS, *Library of Congress*, 14 October, 2008. 14p.

**Liberty and Security: Recommendations for the Next Administration and Congress** 2009 Transition, *Constitution Project*, 18 November, 2008.

**Media Coalition Recommendations for Action by the Obama Administration to Strengthen Transparency and Integrity in Government** *Sunshine in Government Initiative*, November 2008. 4p.

**Protecting Homeland from Day One: A Transition Plan** *Third Way*, 16 November, 2008. 30p.

**Where Obama Should Find Cabinet Members** *Brookings Institution*, 6 November, 2008.

**Lost in Transition** - "helping you navigate the Presidential handover"; this website is a joint project of *National Journal* and *Government Executive* magazines.

**Achieving the Potential: The Future of Federal E-rulemaking** *Committee on the Status and Future of Federal e-Rulemaking*, 2008. 71p.

**Defense Imperatives for the New Administration** *Defense Science Board*, 5 November, 2008. 72p.

**A Fresh Start for a New Administration: Reforming Law and Justice Policies** *American Constitution Society for Law and Policy*, November 2008.

**Moving Toward a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Right-to-Know Agenda: Recommendations to President-elect Obama and Congress** *Right to Know Community*, November 2008. 112p.

**The Oval Office Facebook Group - Government 2.0: The Presidential Transition** *Science Progress*, 3 November, 2008.

**Passing the Baton: Preparing for the Presidential Transition** *Subcommittee on Government Management, Organization, and Procurement, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, U.S. Congress*, 24 September, 2008.

**Transition to a New Presidential Administration** *Office of Personnel Management*, 10 November, 2008.

**Lead With Confidence** *Brookings*, 7 November, 2008. 3p.



**Presidential Transition: Guide to Federal Human Resources Management** *Office of Personnel Management*, June 2008. 66p.

**The U.S. Office of Government Ethics: A Resource for the Presidential Transition** *Office of Government Ethics*, November 2008. 36p.

**The United States Presidential Transition** *Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs*, November 2008.

**What Now? Staffing the White House** *Brookings*, 10 November, 2008.

### **2008-2009 Presidential Transition Resources**

**Presidential Powers in National Security: A Guide to the President-Elect** by Louis Fisher. *White House Transition Project*, 2007. 16p.

Over the last half century, Presidents have read their national security powers in sweeping terms, doing great damage to themselves, their parties, the nation, and regions around the world. Fisher considers that in periods of emergency and threats to national security (perceived or real), the rule of law has often taken a backseat to presidential initiatives and abuses. He reminds that the Constitution's design relies on checks and balances and the system of separation of powers, and that understanding them is an essential first step in returning to, and safeguarding, the rule of law and constitutional government.

Note: The **White House Transition Project** is a non-government project funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts

**Tracking the New Administration's Progress** - Gallup Daily - to help better understand Americans' continuing reactions to Obama's historic election win, and his actions between now and his inauguration on 20<sup>th</sup> January.

**Welcome to On Day One!** On November 4th, 2008, Americans will elect new leadership and a new direction for the United States. Help shape a new way forward - share your thoughts, upload videos and tell the next president what to do on the first day in office to improve America's standing in the world.

**Foreign Policy Challenges for the New US President** - Part I: Exploiting a lack of jobs, the Taliban rises in Pakistan's border region, threatening US strategy.

**Foreign Policy Challenges for the New US President** - Part II: While diplomats wrangle, demographics could settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for good.

**The World Looks to Obama** - Part I: But the new president will be preoccupied with challenges at home.

**Renewing American Leadership** by Barack Obama in *Foreign Affairs*.

**The Next President** by Richard Holbrooke in *Foreign Affairs*.

**Podcast: The Next President** by Richard Holbrooke - Podcast - September/October.

**McCain's Concession Speech** - 4 November.      **Obama's Acceptance Speech** - 4 November.

**Submission of the President's Budget in Transition Years** by Robert Keith. *CRS*, 15 September.

**The Upcoming Transition: GAO's Efforts to Assist the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress & the Next Admin.** Sept'08.

### **Presidential Transitions and Foreign Policy**

**Unilateral Delusions** - U.S. prosperity relies on foreign labor, capital and natural resources.

**Do You Really Want This Job?** - Global stability requires the next US president to confront a host of problems and restore confidence quickly.

**The World Awaits** by Richard Haas in *Newsweek*, 25 October.



## THINK TANKS

**The Brookings Institution** - The *Brookings Institution* is a private nonprofit organization devoted to independent research and innovative policy solutions. For more than 90 years, Brookings has analyzed current and emerging issues and produced new ideas that matter—for the nation and the world.

**The Carnegie Endowment** - The *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing cooperation between nations and promoting active international engagement by the United States.

**Center for a New American Security** - The *Center for a New American Security (CNAS)* develops strong, pragmatic and principled national security and defense policies that promote and protect American interests and values.

**Council on Foreign Relations** - Founded in 1921, the *Council on Foreign Relations* is an independent, national membership organization and a nonpartisan center for scholars dedicated to producing and disseminating ideas so that individual and corporate members, as well as policymakers, journalists, students, and interested citizens in the United States and other countries, can better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other governments.

**United States Institute for Peace** - The *United States Institute of Peace* is an independent, nonpartisan, national institution established and funded by Congress. Its goals are to help prevent and resolve violent international conflicts, promote post-conflict stability and democratic transformations, and increase peace-building capacity, tools, and intellectual capital worldwide.

**New America Foundation** - Policy Papers - The *New America Foundation* is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy institute that invests in new thinkers and new ideas to address the next generation of challenges facing the United States. It emphasizes work that is responsive to the changing conditions and problems of our 21st Century information-age economy -- an era shaped by transforming innovation and wealth creation, but also by shortened job tenures, longer life spans, mobile capital, financial imbalances and rising inequality.

***"Today we begin in earnest the work of making sure that the world we leave our children is just a little bit better than the one we inhabit today."***

***- President-Elect Barack Obama***

**Caption:** A sea of onlookers witness the 2<sup>nd</sup> swearing-in ceremony of President George W. Bush at the U.S. Capitol Jan. 20, 2005.



**No recommendation is made in respect of non-U.S. Government web sites listed here.**

**All Internet links were active at 1 December, 2008.**

**American Reference Center, U.S. Embassy, P.O. Box 1190, Wellington**

**We welcome your feedback! Email us: [wellington.arc@state.gov](mailto:wellington.arc@state.gov)  
If you do not have Adobe Acrobat Reader, [download it here](#)**