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An Open Letter To President Obama

By JEFFREY S. HOWARD

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In today's dangerous world, we need a president with experience, leadership and courage. Unfortunately, you have shown us little of those traits.

Your childhood and younger years denied you the opportunity to grow up as an American man, and that is no fault of your own. Unfortunately, your lack of empathy for and experience of a traditional American upbringing has left you out of touch with those of us who grew up learning the traditions and work ethic of our predecessors.

You have never accepted the honor of military service, or held and survived in any sort of entry-level working position. You are bereft of many of the basic building blocks of a true American personality and worldview.

You have never experienced the icy hand of fear caressing your gut during a firefight when your very survival from second to second depends on your luck, wits, fellow troopers and the grace of God. You have never sweated out a payroll when your receivables are late.

You've missed the rewarding feeling of flogging a loaded truck all night to deliver a load 500 miles away at 7 a.m. You never shoveled cow manure for less than minimum wage to earn enough for a rattletrap car. You missed out on greasing dump trucks on the night shift, and never had the opportunity to start out cleaning restrooms and sweeping floors in a factory.

Your education was in the law, and you ignored any opportunity to absorb the lessons of history or the theories of economics. You have never experienced the law of the jungle in the private sector.

While you play golf and basketball and surround yourself with "the swells" enjoying concerts in the People's House, those of us in the general public dine on Spam and Costco burgers. I can't put my wife on a 747 and send her to Spain so she can be ready to spend 10 days on Martha's Vineyard when she gets back. She works seven days a week and so do I — spreading four full- and part-time jobs between us to make ends meet.

I watch in pain while my business venture slides into oblivion and my small IRA erodes as your economic policies push the nation into a double-dip recession. This economy is locking up again, and you cannot blame former President Bush. The great construction jobs I created are ending while you pour trillions in borrowed money into the public sector to buy votes. I blame you personally for appointing the ship of fools you have as Cabinet officials and advisers.

You are repeating the gross mistakes of Japan in the '90s and the Roosevelt administration in the '30s — both of which failed and lengthened severe economic problems for a decade or more. You are intentionally smothering our private sector with regulations, taxes and mandates at the same time you squander the wages and futures of our children and grandkids.

I deplore your continued efforts to divide the greatest nation of immigrants in the world along race and class lines. Pandering to various groups and attempting to set them against other Americans is demagoguery at its worst. I sincerely hope such actions end up damaging you in the end and not our country.

You will leave office with a big pension, Secret Service protection and gold-plated health care for life. I may well end up with 40 years of hard work down the drain, living in a mobile home in the backwoods.

I do not resent you for your good fortune — you worked hard to become president and won the election fair and square. I do, however, despise your policies and the damage they are visiting on our nation, its economy and our future. I have dedicated my remaining years to fighting you and your policies and protecting our children's futures.

I may well end up destroyed financially from the results of your misguided and dangerous actions — but you will never break me psychologically or crush my spirit. I am a Marine, I have a wonderful wife and family, and last but not least, I live in the greatest nation in the world. I shall work to my last breath to keep it that way, and you, sir, shall fail to destroy that dream.

• Howard, a Marine Corps veteran, University of Washington graduate and heavy-equipment supervisor for two decades, is now a developer with projects in Washington and Oregon.

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