

أوباما نجا من العدوى رغم مصافحته عالما مات بالمرض وصورة الزوجين المصابين العائدين من شهر العسل من مكسيكو:

Revealed: British swine flu victims are newlyweds who caught virus during honeymoon in Mexico

كتبها dude abdalla الصديق عبدالله ، في ٢٨ أبريل ٢٠٠٩ الساعة: ١٨:١٠ ص

أوباما نجا من العدوى رغم مصافحته عالما مات بالمرض  
مساع عالمية لاحتواء إنفلونزا الخنازير لكن العدوى تنتشر



باحثون كوريون جنوبيون يفحصون عينات من لحوم غنازير مكسيكية في سيئول (ا ف ب)  
مكسيكو - أ. ف. ب:

ازداد خطر انتشار انفلونزا الخنازير مع تشخيص حالات جديدة مشبوهة في العالم وإطلاق منظمة الصحة العالمية إنذارا، وذلك رغم تشديد اجراءات الوقاية في المكسيك حيث اعلن عن وفاة خمسة مصابين جدد.

واعلنت الولايات المتحدة يوم الأحد " حال الطوارئ الصحية" بعدما رصدت عشرين إصابة حتى الآن بدون تسجيل أي وفاة، وأعلنت عن اخضاع الاشخاص القادمين من بلدان سجلت فيها اصابات لفحوص على الحدود لرصد اي اصابة، وتتوقع السلطات تشخيص حالات جديدة.

وطاولت انفلونزا الخنازير كندا حيث احصيت ست اصابات مؤكدة، وعددا من الدول منها نيوزيلندا وأستراليا وفرنسا وإسرائيل وأسبانيا والبرازيل التي افادت عن حالات مشبوهة. ووجه الرئيس المكسيكي فيليببي كالديرون الاحد دعوة الى "الهدوء" ومراعاة اجراءات الوقاية من انفلونزا الخنازير. وافاد وزير الصحة مساء الاحد عن حصيلة وصلت الى ١٠٣ قتلى و١٦١٤ مريضا قيد المعالجة لا يزال ٤٠٠ منهم في المستشفى.

ولم يوضح ما اذا كانت الوفيات ناتجة عن اصابات مؤكدة واكتفى المتحدث باسمه بذكر مرضى قضوا نتيجة اصابهم "بفيروس"، وتم الإبقاء على حصيلة ٢٠ وفاة بإصابات مؤكدة. وقالت المفوضية الاوروبية انها تتابع الوضع "عن كثب". وبعدها حذرت منظمة الصحة العالمية من "احتمال انتشار آفة"، اعلنت يوم الاحد ان الفيروس الجديد قد يتطور ويصبح "اكثر خطورة بكثير". واوصت منظمة الصحة بان "تشدد جميع البلدان مراقبتها لكل الحالات المرضية غير الاعتيادية التي تشبه الانفلونزا او الالتهاب الرئوي الخطير". وفي ما يلي عدد الاصابات المؤكدة بالمرض والحالات التي يشتبه بأنها اصابات به، التي اعلنت منذ ٢٤ نيسان/ابريل:

في المكسيك سبب الفيروس في المكسيك بؤرة المرض وفاة عشرين شخصا من اصل ١٠٣ اصابات "مرجحة" بينما وضع ١٦١٤ مريضا تحت المراقبة الطبية. وسجلت الولايات المتحدة

اربعين اصابة بينها ثمانٍ وعشرون في نيويورك (شمال شرق) وسبع إصابات في كاليفورنيا (غرب) واصابتان في كل من تكساس (جنوب) وكنساس (وسط) وواحدة في اوهايو (شمال).

و اعلنت كندا يوم الاحد عن ست اصابات بالمرض، اربع منها في نيوسكوتلاند على المحيط الاطلسي واثنتان في كولومبيا البريطانية غرب البلاد. والمصابون الاربعة في نيوسكوتلاند هم طلاب شاركوا برحلة مدرسية الى المكسيك في شبه جزيرة يوكاتان، ووصفت عوارض اصاباتهم بانها "متوسطة الخطورة".

اما المصابان الآخرا فقد كانا في المكسيك ايضا ولم يدخلتا المستشفى لان اصابتهما وصفت بانها "سليمة". وفي نيوزيلندا قال وزير الصحة النيوزيلندي ان عشرة تلاميذ ظهرت عليهم عوارض المرض بعد زيارة استمرت ثلاثة اسابيع للمكسيك "مصابون على الارجح" بانفلونزا الخنازير لكن ذلك لم يؤكد بعد. وفي استراليا ادخل شخصان عائدان من المكسيك وظهرت عليهما عوارض المرض، المستشفى وخضعا لتحاليل كشفت انهما ليسا مصابين بالفيروس، حسبما اعلن ناطق باسم رئيسة وزراء ولاية كوينزلاند انا بلاي. وتم رصد ثمانى اصابات محتملة بالمرض في اسبانيا حسب السلطات الصحية الاسبانية، ثلاث منها في كاتالونيا (شرق) والباقي في بيلباو (شمال) والمنسا (جنوب شرق) وفالنسيا (شرق) (وتيرويل (شمال) والجزيرة الخضراء (جنوب). وفي فرنسا، كشف تشخيص حالات ثلاثة من اربعة مرضى في فرنسا مساء الاحد سلامتهم من المرض. وهؤلاء الثلاثة هم زوجان وابنهما. والامر نفسه ينطبق على حالتين اخريين قبل ذلك.

تبقى اصابة واحد هي لامرأة في الثانية والخمسين من العمر تقيم في باريس. ويفترض ان تعلن نتائج التحاليل المتعلقة بها اليوم الاثنين.

وكشفت تحاليل في بريطانيا خضع لها مضيف جوي في شركة الطيران بريتش ايريز ادخل السبب المستشفى فور عودته من مكسيكو، انه ليس مصابا بالمرض. وادخل شخصان آخران المستشفى الاحد في سكتلندا الاحد بعيد عودتهما من المكسيك بعدما ظهرت عليهما "عوارض طفيفة تذكر بالانفلونزا". وفي كولومبيا فرضت السلطات الصحية مراقبة طبية على تسعة اشخاص وصلوا من المكسيك وظهرت عليهم عوارض انفلونزا.

ولم يدخل هؤلاء المستشفى بل تم فحصهم في منازلهم.

وفي البرازيل، ادخل رجل في الرابعة والعشرين من العمر -عائد من المكسيك ويعاني من اعراض انفلونزا- المستشفى في ساو باولو في إجراء احتياطي، حسبما ذكر الاطباء.

إلى ذلك، تأكد ان الرئيس الأميركي باراك أوباما الذي زار المكسيك الشهر الماضي خال من أية عوارض لمرض إنفلونزا الخنازير.

وأكد المتحدث باسم البيت الأبيض جوش إرنست ان صحة الرئيس الأميركي ليست مهددة بالخطر.

وقال لصحيفة "نيويورك ديلي نيوز" الاميركية "أكد له الأطباء ان زيارته إلى المكسيك لم تشكل أي خطر على صحته".

يشار إلى ان صحيفة "ديلي ميل" البريطانية كانت قد ذكرت ان أوباما الذي زار المكسيك، حيث انتشر فيروس جديد من إنفلونزا الخنازير، في ١٦ ابريل /نيسان، صافح عالم آثار مكسيكي توفي بعد ٢٤ ساعة من لقائه الرئيس الأميركي، وكان سبب الوفاة انفلونزا الخنازير.

Revealed: British swine flu victims are newlyweds who caught virus during honeymoon in Mexico

By [Daniel Martin](#) and [Nicola Boden](#)

Last updated at 10:58 AM on 28th April 2009

First British victims are honeymoon couple

- WHO warns: 'Containment is not a feasible option'
- Health official says 40% of Britons could be infected
- UK holiday firms cancel flights and repatriate tourists
- Brown: 'We'll take all action necessary to halt spread'

The two Britons suffering from swine flu are newlyweds who spent their honeymoon in Mexico, it was revealed today.

Iain and Dawn Askham, from Polmont, near Falkirk, flew back from Cancun last Tuesday with flu-like symptoms and last night tested positive for the killer disease.

The development raises fears about holidaymakers returning from Mexico because it had been thought tourist regions were relatively safe.

Britons are now being advised to avoid all but essential travel to the country and holiday firms have already started to cancel flights and bring people home.

One official from the World Health Organisation warned up to 40 per cent of the British population could be infected if the outbreak becomes a pandemic.

But Gordon Brown pledged to take 'all the action necessary' to stop the disease spreading.



First British victims: Iain Askham and wife Dawn at their wedding earlier this month. They fell ill during their honeymoon in Mexico

'We have been preparing for this kind of scenario for many years. Britain is among the best prepared countries in the world,' he insisted in Poland this morning.

The Askhams fell ill after returning from Mexico last Tuesday, where the outbreak of the H1N1 strain is believed to have first crossed from pigs to people.

Seven of their friends and family are also showing symptoms of the virus, along with 17 other people in the UK who are being tested.

Neighbour Rachel Anderson said today: 'They were in Mexico for their honeymoon. On Saturday one of the neighbours noticed a paramedic on the street and they have not seen the couple since. It is a shame for them and I feel for their family. They will be very worried.'

The couple were identified after the World Health Organisation dramatically raised its alert level from three to four, two steps short of declaring a full-blown pandemic.

Professor Neil Ferguson, from Imperial College, London, sat on the taskforce that made the decision.

'We might expect up to 30-40 per cent of the population to become ill in the next six months if this truly turns into a pandemic,' he warned.



Happy couple: The Askhams in their wedding finery



Wedding bliss: They take their first dance after becoming man and wife

Britain's chief medical officer Sir Liam Donaldson insisted the higher-level alert did not mean a pandemic was inevitable but admitted: 'We are very concerned.'

'It does seem as if this disease is a new strain of flu, it is one that is spreading quite rapidly from person to person,' he said.

He has already conceded Britain cannot expect to escape lightly if a global pandemic does take hold but should be able to mitigate its effect with anti-viral drugs.

Health Secretary Alan Johnson told MPs yesterday the NHS had enough drugs such as Tamiflu, which has proved effective in Mexico, to treat half the population.

Scientists were also working on a vaccine against the new strain.

Holiday companies, following the Foreign Office warning, are now taking drastic steps to stop travel to Mexico and to repatriate Britons already on holiday there.

Thomson cancelled two flights to Cancun this morning and was working out how to return people to the UK.

'While we do appreciate that the news may be a great disappointment to customers, we hope they will also understand that their health and safety is of paramount importance to us,' the company said.



Fears: The Askhams' home in Polmont, near Falkirk

Honeymoon couple Faye and Russ Cavis had arrived at Manchester Airport this morning hoping the flight might go ahead, but were resigned to the cancellation.

'We were expecting it but we were just sort of hopeful that everything would still be OK. We thought we would still come here and see what happened,' Mrs Cavis.

'We've had a lot of trauma in the last six months so this is a drop in the ocean. If anything they've saved our lives, anyone who thinks otherwise needs a rethink.

'We were a bit frightened about going anyway, there's been so much on the news. It's the poor people in Mexico I feel sorry for - it must be horrendous.'

Meanwhile, a young woman on an incoming flight from Mexico to Manchester this morning felt ill and had to be treated by paramedics.

An ambulance was waiting for her at the airport but in the end she was sent home. The Health

Protection Agency said she was 'quite well' and will be seen by her GP.



Nowhere to go: Would-be holidaymakers at Manchester Airport this morning after flights to Cancun were cancelled



Pandemic fears: Quarantine officers in South Korea taking saliva samples from a baby at Incheon Airport as they try to stop the virus spreading

The Prime Minister, in Poland this morning, will return to attend the third emergency COBRA meeting in as many days later today.

The global death toll has now soared to 152, double Sunday's total. European Officials have warned against travelling to Mexico of the U.S., where there have been 40 cases.

By last night the flu had reached at least 15 countries.

The World Health Organisation said its move to a level four alert was a significant shift reflecting sustained human-to-human transmission causing outbreaks in at least one country.

Assistant director-general Keiji Fukuda said: 'The change indicates that the likelihood of a pandemic has increased, not that a pandemic is inevitable.'

But he warned: 'At this time containment is not a feasible option.'

The next level is widespread human infection and level six is a full-blown global pandemic. The Scottish swine flu victims are in Monklands Hospital, Airdrie. Mr Askham works for Scottish Power.

Scottish health secretary Nicola Sturgeon revealed work colleagues of the infected pair were among seven others developing symptoms.

But she said doctors had been able to give anti-virals 'much more quickly' to further contacts of those seven, improving the chances of stopping the virus spreading.

'We remain very vigilant,' she said this morning. 'At the moment we have no evidence that the virus is in the wider community, although people will understand I obviously can't rule that out.'





Drastic steps: Clerks are trained how to use respiratory protection masks in Oakland, California, to avoid possible infection



Cautious: An airport official checks a thermal camera which monitors the body temperature of passengers at Tan Son Nhat Airport in Vietnam

As concern grew in Britain yesterday, private health firms saw a surge in demand for anti-viral drugs and NHS Direct reported a rise in calls about flu.

Shares in airlines and holiday companies fell heavily while those in drug firms rose.

Mr Johnson said there had been 25 suspected cases in England, of which eight had tested negative.

One of the suspects, a Canadian woman who had been visiting relatives in Sale, was in hospital but the others were well enough to stay at home.

One is Australian-born journalist Kate Corbett, 29, who has just returned from holiday in Mexico.

From her West London home, where she is under quarantine restrictions, she said: 'Suddenly the runny nose and sore throat I had put down to jet lag and too much partying mutated into feelings of paranoia and guilt.'

'What if I had brought the infection from Mexico to London? The odd thing is that I can't actually go out at all - technically not even to see a doctor - for risk of exposing others if it is the deadly flu.'



Safety first: Foreign tourists wearing protective masks stand in the main Zocalo plaza in downtown Mexico City



Message: A woman in Mexico City with a sign around her neck saying 'immune'

The Department of Health urged people to set up a 'support network of friends and relatives' who could bring medicines and supplies if they were quarantined with suspected swine flu.

It was reported that Mr Johnson was going to include this advice in his Commons statement but decided not to in case it sparked a panic.

The Health Secretary did say the Government had begun 'enhanced' port health checks to identify passengers arriving in the UK with symptoms of the illness.

Travellers from Mexico, where the flu is now estimated to have hit 1,600 people, have been questioned by doctors before leaving the plane.

The Health Protection Agency advised people to cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, to throw away dirty tissues promptly and carefully, and to wash hands and surfaces which are regularly touched.

## HOW TO TELL IF YOU'VE GOT IT

**THIS is the advice from the Health Protection Agency which is given to NHS doctors and nurses.**

**A person should be tested for swine flu if they fulfil any ONE of these three conditions:**

**1. Have you got a fever with a temperature of over 38c (100f)?**

**2. Have you got a flu-like illness with two or more of the following: Cough, runny nose, limb or joint pain, headache?**

**3. Are there signs of another life-threatening illness suggesting of an infectious process?**

**AND the following condition:**

**4. Did the symptoms start within seven days of visiting Mexico or the U.S. states of California, Kansas, New York, Ohio or Texas?**

The first swine flu case in Europe had been confirmed early yesterday - a man in Spain who had returned from Mexico. There are a further 17 suspected cases in the country.

More cases came to light in New Zealand, raising the total number affected there to 13, and there are suspected victims in Israel and France.

Other suspected cases were reported in Ireland, Brazil, Australia, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark and Italy.

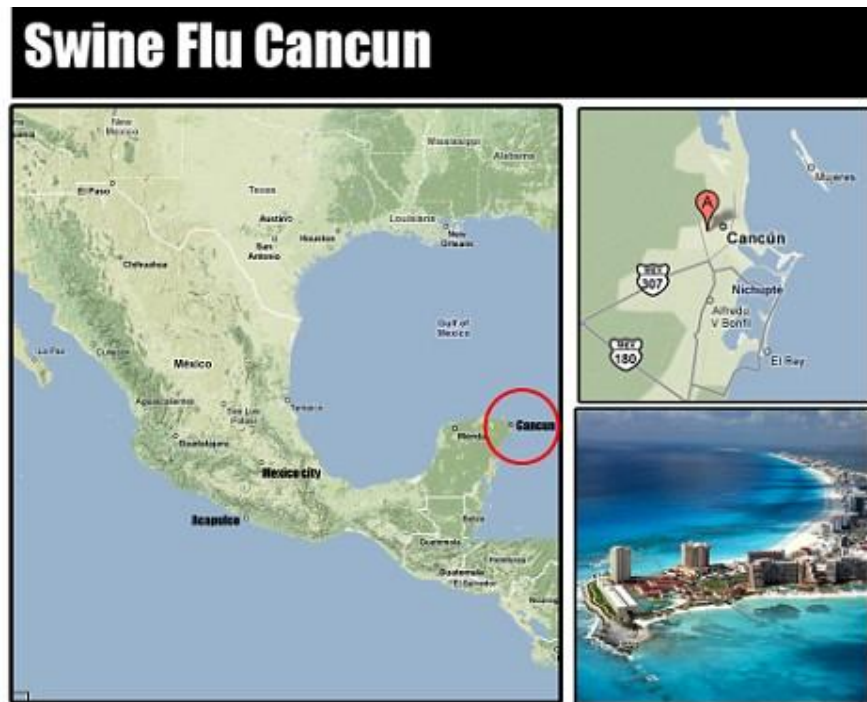
Canada confirmed six cases, while a suspected case in Hong Kong was Asia's first.

Last night experts said they believed the outbreak began in the Mexican village of La Gloria, 12 miles from an American-owned industrial pig farm.

Two babies died and 400 of the 3,000 villagers fell ill with symptoms similar to swine flu in February.

According to local newspapers, Mexico's national health authority believes that waste from the farm's animals may be responsible.

One resident said: 'Suddenly most of the village got ill.'



[Enlarge](#)

Tourist hotspot: Thousands of Britons fly to Cancun every year

There was confusion among officials last night about whether people should travel to Mexico and the U.S.

An average of more than 10,000 Britons visit the U.S. every day of the week - four million a year.

EU health commissioner Andorra Vassiliou said yesterday: 'They should avoid travelling to Mexico or the United States unless it is very urgent for them.'

But after heavy criticism she said she had meant only that people should not visit affected areas.

ABTA, the travel industry trade body, said there were no plans to bring home the 5,000 British holidaymakers in Mexico.

However, now that the Foreign Office has issued an official warning not to travel, would-be traveller can cancel their bookings and claim a refund or different holiday.

The WHO said there were now 40 confirmed swine flu cases in the U.S. and added it was 'very concerned' about the spread of the disease there.

President Barack Obama tried to avoid panic by saying the outbreaks were a cause for concern, 'not a cause for alarm'.

But U.S. authorities have advised Americans not to go to Mexico and are monitoring the border.



و كأنه المخلص و المنقذ كالمسيح (أستغفر الله مائة يوم من حكم أوباما: ثلثا الشعب الأمريكي يراه  
( العظيم )

Americans regards him as something of a Messiah. But Obama's second 100 days are likely to be tougher than his first. So will fate overwhelm him?

By [Max Hastings](#)

Last updated at 12:37 AM on 28th April 2009

There is an old story of a school scripture teacher who asked a sixth-former how he would react if he answered the doorbell one night and found Jesus Christ on the step. The boy said: 'Ask him in, give him a drink and send for the vicar.'

Forget for a moment the Right-wing bitching about Barack Obama. Set aside criticism of his banquet of promises. The overwhelming reality of his first quarter as the most powerful man on Earth is that many Americans regard him as something close to the Messiah.

His poll approval ratings are no higher than were George Bush's eight years ago because a lemon-sour minority of hicks, bigots and Republican retros turns its back on him.



Challenge ahead: American President Barack Obama

But two in three Americans back their new President way beyond mere enthusiasm. They focus on him passionate hopes for a revival of their country's stature and selfbelief, brought low by George Bush and Wall Street's bankers.

Barack, Michelle, their gals and the new first dog dominate America's media like no First Family since the Kennedys. His grace, wit and dignity, together with his wife's feisty, sexy style, fulfil all the nation's yearnings for democratic royalty.

'Americans love this guy,' one of the most powerful - and instinctively cynical - New York editors said to me last week. 'If not him, then what?' A TV pundit asserted at primetime on Thursday that Obama is not merely the most trusted human being in America today, but 'the most trusted institution'.

At the weekend I heard a Texan doctor suggest that Bush was a 'dry drunk'. That is to say, while the former President never touched liquor in the White House, his sly, narrowly obsessional conduct of office was typical of the alcoholic he once was.

Whether or not this is true, one of the most striking characteristics of his successor is that Obama is so comfortable with himself. He seems secure in an emotional compact with his family and the world, which few people and incredibly few politicians achieve.

His serenity astonishes everybody who works with him. He has assumed the mantle of office as if the White House was his natural inheritance.

Tomorrow's 100-day 'landmark', about which everybody has become so excited, is of course unreal. Back in February 1945, when Winston Churchill heard that President Roosevelt would spare only five days to attend the Yalta conference with Stalin, the old Prime Minister observed in exasperation that even the Almighty allowed himself seven days to make the world.

Nowadays, however, summits like the G20 are shoe-horned into a single day. People allow themselves to talk as if a President could change not only anything but everything in three months.

For heaven's sake - the poor man has barely had time to find out where the spare loo rolls are kept in the Oval Office washroom. What we can sensibly say so far is that he has charisma that makes every Hollywood star look a punk. He has set an agenda for change, such as few national leaders attempt. He makes Gordon Brown seem a scowling pygmy.

His staff at the White House speak of the 'head-spinning' pace since Inauguration Day. They battle against chronic exhaustion. Since January 20, the President has ordered the Guantanamo Bay detention centre to be closed, recast Afghanistan strategy, visited nine countries, met 60 national leaders, legislated against job discrimination, extended health coverage, modified the ban on stem-cell research, sacked the boss of General Motors, launched a historic 'reach-out' to the Muslim world, produced a \$3.6 trillion (£2.5 trillion) budget, forced a \$787 billion (£538 billion) economic stimulus through Congress, and flagged his determination to drive ahead with the most radical healthcare proposals in U.S. history.

He wants everything he does to seem part of a single narrative, a bid to make this not just a good presidency, but a great one. Yet it is much too soon to know whether he will succeed, first in solving the economic crisis.

His wife's feisty, sexy style, fulfil all the nation's yearnings for democratic royalty

---

Almost no one I meet here shares the stock market's eagerness to believe the worst is over. 'Everybody is still very scared,' a veteran Wall Street banker told me. 'No big money is risking anything - what we're seeing in the market is a traders' rally.'

Critics accuse the President of failing to use his brilliance as a communicator to explain the crisis to bewildered Americans. It is also alleged that the administration has not yet solved the vital problem of ridding banks of their toxic assets.

I heard an economist suggest a gloomy explanation: 'What if Obama doesn't know what to say?'

What if his Treasury Secretary, Tim Geithner, really can't think what to do next?' The world yearns to see those famous green shoots. Yet smart people on this side of the Atlantic scarcely see a break in the soil.

Obama's presidency is already being compared to Ronald Reagan's, in that the man is much more popular than his policies. The U.S. is instinctively conservative. It is striking to contrast the reaction of its people to the economic crisis with that of the British.

We look to our politicians, however inadequate, to solve problems. Most Americans, however, believe that citizens get things done. They fear and mistrust the state, which is why many are furious about tax money bailing out banks. Polls show 55 per cent popular support for Obama's healthcare plans. But a stubborn rump of Americans recoil from the notion of a national health service.

'What happens when they start rationing transplants when you need one?' demanded a sceptical Florida pensioner.



Family man: Obama with wife Michelle and their two daughters Sasha (L) and Malia at his election rally in Chicago last November

A slow, sore Georgian voter said to a senator on live TV last week: 'I want to be told you are doing absolutely everything in your power to stop this radical, socialist government we've got in the White House spending all our money.'

A Michigan blogger named Tal Simmons wrote: 'Obama's radical ideas, flip-flopping direction and socialist bad-mouthing of our great nation will undo him in 2012.' Another like-minded contributor added: 'He doesn't have the Reagan vision for America, he doesn't have the experience and HE DOESN'T LIKE AMERICA.'

To be sure, he does not like redneck Bush 'ole boy' America. One of the nastiest problems to hit Obama's desk is the torture story. There now seems overwhelming evidence that George Bush and his mad, bad associates led by Vice-President Dick Cheney instigated a policy of systematically mistreating Al Qaeda suspects. They breached U.S. law and have since lied through their teeth about it.



The media pack and Democrats on Capitol Hill are in full cry, demanding justice, vengeance or whatever you want to call it upon those responsible. Obama's body language makes it plain that he does not want to go there.

He dreads the prospect of the country succumbing to an orgy of recrimination and legal process such as was unleashed by Nixon's Watergate and Clinton's Monica Lewinsky scandal. Americans today need to focus on the present and future. It will be a tragedy if the nation overdoses on punishment for the past.

Yet there is passionate public anger about the 'stain of evil' with which the last administration besmirched the nation's flag and honour. Demands for legal process against the guilty are probably irresistible.

Yet already it is plain that bipartisanship cannot hold. Many Republicans hate Obama...

---

Prepare to see America launch itself into one of its paroxysms of moral indignation, which Barack Obama knows could damage his own presidency.

If Democrats insist on putting Bushies in the dock, cornered Republicans will fight back with everything they have got. Many Americans out there in the sticks still buy Cheney's defiant assertion that 'torture works', that any means were justifiable to save America from harm.

If, God help us, there is a terror attack on the U.S. while alleged Republican torturers are being whipped around a Washington circus ring, Obama's enemies will say that he is 'soft on terrorists'. His popularity could take a disastrous hit.

Yet the influential New York Times columnist Frank Rich wrote on Sunday: 'President Obama can talk all he wants about not looking back, but this grotesque past is bigger than even he is. It won't vanish into a memory hole.'

'The White House, Congress and politicians of both parties should get out of the way... What we must have are fair trials that at long last uphold and reclaim our nation's commitment to the rule of law.'

The worst victim of such action could be Obama's campaign for consensus. Each day, his team drives home the message that he is 'the people's President', the 'listening chief executive'. All the world knows, because the White House tells it so, that Obama each day reads ten letters from ordinary voters, picked out by staff from a mailbag of 40,000.

Because I signed up to his website when reporting his campaign last year, I receive the same weekly email messages as 13 million U.S. voters, each one personalised: 'Dear Max, Come to our listening tour meeting at your local town hall. You'll get the chance to help write plans for Organizing America in 2009 and beyond.'

These meetings are not just for folks who were involved in the campaign, we're hopeful that every Missourian' - or Kansan, or Ohioan, or Californian - 'will get involved.'

And last week: 'Max - your representatives need to hear from you as they work for the change you mandated in November. Doing what's right can be thankless when the culture of Washington tries to make political games out of the issues that matter to everyday Americans.'



Celebration: Supporters react to Obama's election victory in Chicago

It is all brilliantly done, featuring national video links to the President, a sustained drive to keep every possible American inside Obama's big tent as he presents ever-more contentious legislation to Congress.

Yet already it is plain that bipartisanship cannot hold. Many Republicans hate Obama, just as their grandfathers hated Roosevelt. They want him to fail. For now, they thrash in impotence. But if some flagship administration policies come unstuck, they could gain ground. Obama's big green 'cap and trade' measure on carbon emissions (a system which penalises heavy polluters) is tipped to fall in Congress.

Abroad, with notable myopia, the French and German governments have rebuffed Obama's requests for more help in Afghanistan. Chances are that the U.S. will indeed fail to achieve its Afghan objectives. But that does not alter the fact that Europeans so far seem painfully unimaginative in their response to this remarkable President.

Likewise, Obama's attempts to achieve reconciliation with Iran will probably be frustrated by Iranian fanaticism. He will get no help from Putin's Russia. The U.S. relationship with China promises to stay spiky.

Americans are starting to realise that the world will not lie on its back to have its tummy tickled merely because a superman has moved into the White House.

Obama's second 100 days are likely to be even tougher than his first. Yet because he is such a fascinating man, it is almost as thrilling an experience for a visitor as for an American to watch his story unfold.

The torture of Al Qaeda suspects will not go away

---

Notice that nobody any longer talks about 'this amazing black President'. Even enemies simply acknowledge him as one of the most remarkable personalities of any colour to occupy his office.

John F. Kennedy said on his Inauguration Day in 1961: 'All this will not be finished in the first 100 days, nor will it be finished in the first 1,000 days.'

Obama is likely to say something similar in his televised progress report to the American people tomorrow night. Washington is bathed in brilliant spring sunshine. The blossom is out. In many parts of America, supporters are holding 100-day parties. A host of people want to share in the thrill of the Obama experience.

The other night, I asked a veteran Democratic presidential adviser whether this President has the potential to achieve greatness. My friend answered: 'He can't determine that himself. Only fate can make a great President.'

So large are the challenges that Obama faces that we must acknowledge the danger that fate will overwhelm him. He is almost certainly trying to do too much.

But people are awed by the spectacle of a politician who tells the truth, a national leader bent upon achieving in office exactly what he promised on the campaign trail. If he knocks on your door, it is probably smart to ask him in, offer him a drink and send for the vicar.

The new tenant of the White House may not quite be the Messiah, but he is the sort of American leader the world has been waiting a long, long time for

--

Aboaziz®

<http://www.aboaziz.net/>