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As the forty fourth president of the United States, President Barrack Obama has accomplished several feats. Being the first African American president in the history of the United States is in its self a phenomenal achievement though other elements factor in as well. Since his inception in 2008, president Obama faced many great challenges, the immediate one being the 2007 to 2008 global recession which was severe in the United States in particular.

Through a number of financial policies and stimulus packages, president Obama was able to lift America from the verge of depression and though the economy is not yet completely stable, progress is evident throughout the nation. President Obama was also prominent in his attempt to reach out to the Islamic community which has for a long time been considered to be at odds with American capitalist ideology. The president went to great lengths to symbolize a new beginning to the way America and Islamic nations coexisted and he also endeavored to convince Russia to abandon its nuclear weapons program all of which won him universal appeal. With such sentimentalism for global peace, president Obama was nominated for and awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. more recently, the president signed into legislation one of the most controversial yet significant bills in American history, which allowed for the provision of comprehensive medical insurance to every American citizen regardless of their income. With such outstanding accomplishments, president Obama has outdone many of his predecessors though from my perspective, president Obama has not accomplished enough to be ranked as one of the top five presidents in United States history.

This essay takes a comparative look at the accomplishments of my prospective top five American presidents in history vis-a-vis Barack Obama's accomplishments.

## **George Washington**

George Washington was an exceptional soldier who fought for America in several wars such as the 1754 mission to Fort Duquesne and the Monongahela expedition of 1755 where he provided admirable leadership and motivation (Skidmore 51). Though America was still under the colonial British rule, he went ahead to chair meetings in 1774 which saw the adoption of Fairfax Resolves which led to the declaration of independence. He was also an elected delegate First Continental Congress which called for the unification of all states and was also present at the First Virginia Convention consequently playing a major role in the liberation of America from the British (Murray & Blessing 79). His broad leadership was not only in meetings and when it emerged that America had to fight for its liberation, Washington was the leader of the Continental Army that fought in the American Revolutionary War against the British from 1775 to 1783 eventually gaining their liberation from the Kingdom of Great Britain and ensured sustained peace with Britain with the signing of the Jay Treaty in 1795 (Eland 112). This earned Washington a lot of respect from his compatriots and his selfless leadership was an inspiration to many which saw him being unanimously elected as the first President of the United States of America in 1789. George Washington was also keen in trying to avoid unnecessary conflict and was of the option of building a strong and stable nation through a central

government supported by a viable a tax system and managed through a national bank (Skidmore 53).

As such he issued the Proclamation of Neutrality which basically isolated the United States from involvement in foreign conflicts. He served as the US President for two terms and turned down offers to serve a third term thus establishing the policy that limits the serving duration of a U. S president to two years (Eland 110).

## **Abraham Lincoln**

America's sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln just like Barrack Obama was a lawyer, though in comparison, their backgrounds were quite different since Lincoln hailed from a relatively poor family. Lincoln and Obama were also Illinois state legislators and members of the United States House of Representatives before they were elected as president. One unique aspect of Abraham Lincoln is that he had about eighteen months of formal education and the rest of his academic accomplishments were self taught through avid reading and outstanding retention of information (Murray & Blessing 85). Though both presidents faced tough opposition especially when they were about to occupy the presidential office the southern states posed a great threat to Lincoln's presidency by asserting that they would secede if he became president(Ridings & Mclver 26).

Once he was appointed, seven cotton-growing states in the South affirmed themselves as a new nation called the Confederate States of America (Murray & Blessing 85). In addition, civil war broke out when Union troops were attacked at Fort Sumter. To settle the unrest, Lincoln announced the

Emancipation Proclamation and put it into effect in 1863 which effectively put an end to slavery with the help of passing of the Thirteenth Amendment.

Black men were also in a position join the Union Army and Navy which was previously impossible and ultimately the Confederation states were overcome and the North and South were reunited(Bose & Landis 79).

Abraham Lincoln also put into effect the Morrill Act which allowed agricultural and mechanical colleges to be put up in each state. He also availed large tracts of land in the west for low prices through the Homestead Act in order to settle majority of freed rebels, homeless families and slaves. He also approved the National Banking Act which facilitated the establishment of the first paper currency which would be managed through a new network of national banks.

His Pacific Railway Acts of 1862 and 1864 allowed for the establishment of the first transcontinental railroad which was responsible for expanding the trade and transport industries in America (Murray & Blessing 86).

## **Theodore Roosevelt**

Theodore Roosevelt was the 26th President of the United States of America and was often referred to as one of the ablest presidents of the progressive era. Roosevelt unlike Obama was aggressive in his attempts to establish equality such as control of monopolies in industry, trade and commerce, implementation of the anti-trust act and the execution of progressive ideology (Eland 92).

Roosevelt main commitment was to the public which led him to close down registered businesses also known as trusts in transport and banking that

were defrauding the public through manipulating the supply of products hence selling them at high prices (Murray & Blessing 89). Roosevelt personally ordered the indictment of large companies under the 1890 Sherman Antitrust Act such as Northern Securities Company and J. D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company (Ridings & McIver 28). In addition, Roosevelt saw through congress the ' Pure Food and Drug Act' and the ' Meat Inspection Act' which saw a cleaner and hygienic approach to the way food was handled. The public had been outraged by the unhygienic conditions in the food processing plants and the acts allowed for sanitation in handling and packing of food as well as meat inspection in the plants which is applied to date (Bose & Landis 84). Roosevelt conservatism efforts saw the passing of the ' Antiquities Act' which facilitated the construction of 18 new National Museums, more than 40 bird sanctuaries, a number of national forests as well as four game reserves in the United States(Eland 121).

## **John F Kennedy**

Similar to Barrack Obama, John F Kennedy was relatively young when he was elected as the 35th president of the United States. He had similar intentions to Barrack Obama with regards to peace though Kennedy went even further to establish the Peace Corps (Skidmore 35). During his reign, America had a strained relationship with the Soviet Union regarding Europe and ideology. The relationship between the soviets and America was especially tense in Germany regarding the east and west which saw the two nations on the brink of war.

Kennedy was however quick to intervene and was able to prevent war with the soviets but the standoff led to the construction of the Berlin wall.

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Kennedy also signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty which was aimed at close down any existing nuclear test sites (Ridings & McIver 33). In addition to ending racial discrimination, President Kennedy proposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which ensured that all American citizens held equal rights in terms of living and employment and affirmed his commitment by creating the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity.

## **Franklin D. Roosevelt**

As the 32nd President of the United States Franklin D. Roosevelt was in a similar situation as Barrack Obama, in that during his tenure America went into depression (Eland 102). Unlike Obama who injected billions of dollars into the economy to revive growth, Franklin D. Roosevelt created 'The New Deal' that encouraged the increasing construction of buildings and bridges.

Since the construction needed labor, an increasing number of people received employment which in turn spurred economic growth thus ending the depression (Eland 104). In addition, Roosevelt helped correct the abuses that were taking place in Wall Street through the SEC, created jobs in collaboration with the TVA, WPA as well as other public works projects.

Roosevelt was also president at the time World War II was taking place and he was able to lead the nation through the crisis and built a security network to shield America from foreign invasion (Bose & Landis 70). He also established social security which ensured that old and jobless citizens had an income.

## **Conclusion**

President Barrack Obama has made significant contributions to America's foreign relationship and as such, he has accomplished considerable actions. However, some of the preceding presidents accomplished exceedingly more due to the fact that they either led America through an enormous crisis or transitioned the nation to a greater level. The only crisis in America during president Obama tenure in office was the recession which nevertheless posed a big challenge to the administration. America has not transitioned during Obama's tenure and hence George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, John F Kennedy and Franklin D. Roosevelt outrank him in as far as great accomplishments are concerned.

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