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November 4, 2017: America is Recovering from President Obama

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Title: America is Recovering from President Obama

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11/4/2017—Readers of this blog know what a hero Barack Obama is to me. Yet, I read with approval last week's column by Tribune columnist Jay Ambrose that America needed to recover from Obama and however badly, Donald Trump is helping do exactly that. Given all the criticisms that Ambrose piles on Trump—"[his] ignorance, his narcissistic juvenilia, his verbal klutziness, his vulgarity and a sea of tweets"—what is it that Trump is helping us recover from? President Obama governed by Executive order. He did this not just in areas of traditional Presidential discretion, such as deportation policy, but in areas like healthcare where there is no justification for Presidential lawmaking. An easy way for a country to lose its power of self-government is to permit strongman rule. That is just what President Obama did over and over again. It is no answer to say that the Republican Congress was unrelenting in its opposition to anything Obama wanted to do. That is true but irrelevant. Such opposition requires a political response—run against the opposition Congress, as President Truman once did. Some of these actions were justifiable because they really did not involve law—such as the Paris Climate Accord. But many did. This is why Trump is so easily dismantling the Obama legacy—he who lives by executive action unfortunately dies by it. It is good to be reminded that law, actually legislation, really matters.