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Obama Won't Abandon Blame Bush Strategy

White House advisers say George W. Bush's policies created "the hole we're in."

By [KENNETH T. WALSH](#)

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The White House has no plans to give up on its blame-Bush strategy. A White House adviser says that George W. Bush and his policies created "the hole we're in," and President Obama will keep reminding the country of the economic "mess" he inherited. Obama takes frequent jabs at his predecessor for leaving him an economy that was teetering on the brink of collapse, and White House aides say he won't stop anytime soon. At a meeting Wednesday with Senate Democrats, for example, Obama rejected Arkansas Sen. Blanche Lincoln's call for him to move to the center. Obama said, "If the price of certainty is essentially for us to adopt the exact same proposals that were in place for eight years leading up to the biggest economic crisis since the Great Depression ... the result is going to be the same. I don't know why we would expect a different outcome pursuing the exact same policy that got us into this fix in the first place." Last week, Obama also issued a blame-Bush statement with his budget request: "On the day my administration took office," he said, "we faced an additional \$7.5 trillion in national debt by the end of this decade as a result of the failure to pay for two large tax cuts, primarily for the wealthiest Americans, and a new entitlement program. We also inherited the worst recession since the Great Depression—which, even before we took any action, added an additional \$3 trillion to the national debt." Republican insiders say voters are tiring of Obama's "blame game" and argue that the current administration has made matters worse with massive spending programs that have exploded the deficit. On the positive side, Obama will continue to focus on job creation and efforts to help small businesses with tax breaks and incentives to hire new employees. Obama and his advisers were pleased that the latest government report, issued Friday, shows that the unemployment rate is down from 10 percent to 9.7 percent. But Obama and his aides were startled by the government's finding that during the first quarter of last year the nation lost far more jobs than was earlier estimated—an additional 824,000. They blame this, again, on Bush.

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