**Lesson 1: 2008 was not a fluke**

Demographics played a huge role in this election. As we argued in our report “The Path to 270” that came out in November 2011, demographics was really what Obama had on his side in terms of an emerging factor that was in his favor, that might help him prevail against a bad economy which usually hurts the incumbent.

We had a specific prediction, in fact, that minorities would increase by 2 percentage points as a share of voters; that white noncollege voters, who are the least sympathetic to the president, would decline by 3 points; and white college graduates are kind of in between. And, in fact, we were exactly right. That’s exactly what the exit polls tell us happened in the 2012 election.

We also argued in that report and elsewhere that Obama was likely to get 80 percent again of the minority vote and that Latinos in particular were likely to be more supportive of the president than they even were in 2008. And all of that came to pass and explains a large part of his election victory.

**Lesson 2: The coalition wants government to work for the common good**

I think one thing that does weld this coalition together is a view that, contrary to what conservatives tend to say about government, which is like “the less the better, cut it to the bone,” to the extent government policies do anything, they should try to redistribute income upward rather than downward. I think this coalition has a very different view that government has an important role to play in distributing opportunity across society in terms of regulating the market, in terms of providing services that are needed, in terms of investing in things like education, clean energy, and so on, that’s going to make the country more productive over the long haul and provide opportunity for everyone.

I think people see that government has that role and it’s an important one to play, and it shouldn’t be underfunded. And to do those things, maybe we have to consider, for example, raising more revenue. Maybe we have to consider taxes going up on at least part of the population—particularly the most well off. So I think that’s a view and the values underlying it are shared by a lot of members of the coalition.

**Lesson 3: Progressives cannot take their coalition for granted**

No, they're not locked in stone. You’ve got to draw these voters to you. You’ve got to make them identify with your vision of the country.

And then, of course, very important as we look at Obama’s second term, you’ve got to deliver. You’ve got to deliver governance that people recognize as improving their lives. You’ve got to keep pushing forward on the kind of policies that Obama was pushing in his first term. You’ve got to deliver on the promise of health care reform. You’ve got to deliver on the promise of more investment in education. You’ve got to deliver on an economy where unemployment is a lot lower and growth is a lot higher and people feel they have a lot more opportunities. That’s what his emerging coalition is looking for.

In the end, people judge you by what you do, not just by what you say, and I think that, you know, we’ll see how that turns out. But I think the message should be loud and clear to the politicians that represent this coalition. Ultimately, they’ve got to deliver.