

Courting Young Votes with Rolling Stone **BUSINESS**Guide

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Gates, he made it clear to the military brass that, "I very much believe in civilian control of our military, and that military decisions are in service of strategies and broader conceptions of diplomacy that are made here in this White House."

"They know I care about them and I respect them, and I think they respect me and listen to what I say," he said. "They understand that I'm the commander in chief."

He said the operation to kill Osama bin Laden illustrated the "constructive relationship" he has developed with the Pentagon.

On Iraq, he said he had fulfilled his promise to end the war responsibly.

"It wasn't as fast as some people would have liked," he said. "It was probably faster than some folks in the Pentagon would have liked."

Reflecting on whether there had been a change in racial politics since he became president, Obama said he has never accepted the idea that his election represented a "post-racial period."

Still, he said, he often hears people remark about the importance to black children of having an African-American president and African-American first lady.

"That's hugely important," he added, "but you shouldn't also underestimate the fact that there are a whole bunch of little white girls and white boys all across the country who just take it for granted that there's an African-American president. That's the president they're growing up with, and that's changing attitudes."

No interview with Rolling Stone is complete without cultural touchstones.

Obama recalled watching singer

Mick Jagger rehearse for his appearance during a February White House tribute to the blues and was impressed by the respect the Rolling Stones frontman displayed toward lesser-known and younger musicians. He said Jagger recalled the generosity he had experienced upon meeting blues greats like Howlin' Wolf and B.B. King, and displayed "the sense of him wanting to do that same thing, that it all comes full circle."

As he often does, Obama said he is not a fan of television news, though he admitted to liking Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" with Jon Stewart, whom he called "brilliant."

As for his own pop talents, Obama was matter-of-fact about his two acclaimed, though abbreviated, moments of public singing.

"I can sing," he said confidently. "I wasn't worried about being able to hit those notes."

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