

A Surplus of Indifference on the National Debt



Earlier this week, after meeting and negotiating with congressional leaders from both parties, President Trump proudly announced bipartisan support for (and his endorsement of) a two-year budget deal that raises the debt limit.

The plan removes the automatic budget cuts from the 2011 sequester, and adds a whopping \$320 billion in federal spending. This assures trillion-dollar annual deficits moving forward (even if we continue to have strong economic growth), and a 4 percent increase in discretionary spending each year.

If the Tea Party movement were still a thing, this news would have assuredly sent thousands of old guys donning colonial outfits into immediate cardiac arrest. After all, we're talking about a much larger "stimulus" than even the one Barack Obama spearheaded in 2009 (\$787 billion **spread out over 10 years**).

If you'll recall, it was that very legislative act that

launched the Tea Party movement in the first place.

Times have certainly changed.

After nearly a decade of Republican voters excoriating and punishing Obama, the Democrats, and even prominent leaders of their own party for presiding over far too much federal spending, the base abruptly fell silent on the issue in 2016 (where it has remained ever since).

The timing was by no means random. 2016 was when an unconventional Republican presidential candidate – armed with celebrity charisma, snappy catchphrases, and schoolyard insults – managed to win the nomination on a big-government platform that included an unequivocal refusal to deal with federal entitlement programs (unarguably the largest drivers of our national debt).

With Donald Trump's takeover of the party came the shocking abandonment of the one position that seemed to unite *all* base Republicans and conservatives: fiscal discipline.

Prominent media-conservatives, who'd spent the previous few years branding John Boehner, Mitch McConnell, and Paul Ryan as "RINOs" for failing to achieve sweeping spending cuts in the face of Harry Reid's Senate majority and Obama's presidential veto, suddenly decided that fiscal solvency wasn't all that important after all. Well, not as important as demo viewership, listenership, and readership anyway.

And as the *Washington Examiner's* Philip Klein pointed out this week, even the small-government Republican hardliners in Congress, who were elected to teach the "Establishment GOP" a lesson in fiscal restraint, quickly turned to jello:

The Freedom Caucus, founded to supposedly represent the Tea Party values of limited government in Congress, has devolved into a PR shop for Trump. Mick Mulvaney, one of the founders of the group, has discounted the importance of deficits as

the president's budget man and chief of staff. And even Rush Limbaugh recently declared that, "Nobody is a fiscal conservative anymore. All this talk about concern for the deficit and the budget has been bogus for as long as it's been around."

Limbaugh's breathtaking hypocrisy aside, the debt issue should be of *dire* concern not just to people on the political right, but to every American who cares even a little about the quality of life of their children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and beyond.

For those of who understood its importance during the previous administration, but somehow no longer do, I would recommend reading Noah Rothman's sobering piece on the topic. It lays out the gory details: the debt reaching 100% of GDP; accelerated borrowing costs for homeowners, students, and entrepreneurs; investment capital drying up; a significant recession; the collapse of Medicare and Social Security; taxes through the roof; political dysfunction that makes our current landscape look like a well-oiled machine.

The burden we're placing on future generations is absolutely staggering. Rothman's piece also explains why voters – not primarily politicians – are ultimately responsible for the looming debt crisis.

In the first two years of Trump's presidency, Republicans (holding the White House and majorities in both branches of Congress) had their best opportunity in over a decade to finally address this crisis. They squandered it – free to do so because the base and the conservative media let them completely off the hook. And contrary to modern right-wing sensibilities, no amount of asking "Would you rather have Hillary?" and playing *whataboutism* rhetorical games with the Democrats is going to rectify the situation.

I get that it's fun to make jokes about how much of our money

Democrats want to burn through, but those one-liners fall a bit flat when our current Republican president is on track to preside over more debt-spending than Obama.

The slightly good news is that the debt-ceiling deal still requires congressional approval, and there will probably be some changes to it between then and now. But the fact that a \$320 billion increase is the bipartisan, president-approved “compromise,” along with the reality that both parties have effectively purged fiscal conservatism from their platforms, means that those changes will be cosmetic at best.

I hope, when the time comes, we’ll be prepared to explain to future generations why we let political cowardliness ruin their shot at economic prosperity and security. But more likely, we’ll just blame it on the other party.

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Did you miss John Daly’s recent trip to the White House? Watch exclusively video of the special event below. Then learn more about his upcoming novel, *Safeguard*, [here](#).

Dealing With Piles

The piles I am referring to have nothing to do with hemorrhoids. For that sort of relief, I believe Preparation H is still the answer. The ones I have in mind are those that are constantly collecting on my desk in the form of notes I have jotted down about all the crazy stuff going on. And while it could be my imagination, I’m convinced they possess the ability to reproduce.

To begin with, a Nazi flag was seen flying above a mosque near

the Palestinian village of Beit Omar, on the outskirts of Hebron. But that won't stop the Jew-haters, both those inside and outside of the rat-infested United Nations, from siding with the barbaric Arabs and Muslims against Israel. Obama's recent choice to replace Susan Rice as ambassador to the U.N., Samantha Power, has gone so far as to suggest that the U.S. military should invade Israel and force them to accept a Palestinian state. Where on earth does Obama find these people?

Speaking of our military, any president who sends them anywhere in the world to defend one sect of Muslims against another should be impeached on the spot. I say if Allah is as great and powerful as these bottom-feeders insist, let Allah protect them, and let us stay the hell out of his way.

Obama announced that he will be petitioning Congress to spend over \$100 million next year to study the inner workings of the human brain. Compared to most of his brainstorms, this one's not completely insane. Besides, the price is only twice as much as the IRS has recently squandered on conferences and videos, but why on earth does the federal government have to finance it? If it can eventually lead to cures for various physical and psychological disorders, why shouldn't the pharmaceutical industry pick up the cost? Why is it that our tax dollars are forever burning a hole in Obama's pocket?

I also can't figure out why the research should be so expensive. After all, it's not as if there aren't plenty of brains lying around available for experiments. In Congress alone, there are hundreds of liberal brains that have never been used.

According to a recent Pew poll, 62% of the respondents believe that the GOP is out of touch with the American people. On the other hand, the majority felt that Republicans have stronger principles than the Democrats, which suggests that if Republicans want to connect with the voters and win future

elections, they had better lose their principles.

In Milwaukee, it was decided at one elementary school to have a gender-bender day, with boys dressing up like girls, and girls dressing up as boys. Thanks to their sensible parents, most of the kids didn't go along with the stupid idea; however, many of the teachers did.

What is wrong with these people? When it's not transvestism that's being encouraged in our schools, the tots are being forced to don burkas and pay their respects to the religion that promotes honor killings, clitorectomies, suicide bombings and war on Christianity, Judaism and America.

Be warned, parents: These are the people to whom you're entrusting your kids for six hours a day.

Chris Matthews, who has managed to channel his inner Porky Pig and turn lisping into an art form, claims that the only reason that conservatives oppose Obama and ObamaCare is because he's a black man. I wonder if he believes we would dislike Obama twice as much if he weren't half white. Furthermore, does he believe that we opposed HillaryCare 20 years ago because she was a female?

For one shining moment, it appeared that the NY Times had come to its senses when it headlined an editorial "Obama Has Lost All Credibility." But it was merely a case of temporary sanity. The Old Gray Senile Lady quickly changed it to "Obama Has Lost All Credibility on This Issue," the issue being the monitoring of our phone calls. So, apparently, the newspaper is okay with the Benghazi cover-up; the IRS's targeting conservatives; Operation Fast & Furious; and the VA's taking up to two years to file the claims of injured veterans, even though, by law, it has to be done within 120 days, and in spite of the Administration's budget having been increased by 40% over the past three years.

It's worth noting that the ocean tides did not rise and the

earth did not stop spinning in spite of the Sequester. For all of Obama's dire warnings, otherwise known as lies, the Sequester did not represent an actual cut in spending, but merely a reduction in future increases. It's like a 200-pound person going on a diet, but not one that would take him down to 180, but merely up to 219 instead of 220.

Finally, in the hope that I can assuage a few of those concerns that keep some people tossing and turning in the wee hours, I will share some actuarial statistics I recently came across. It seems that the odds of being murdered are 18,000-1. The odds of drowning in a bath tub are 840,000-1, but when it comes to losing an appendage to a chainsaw, the odds drop to 4,484-1. The odds of becoming president are 10,000,000-1, whereas the odds of dating a super model – and are there any other kind these days? – are 88,000-1.

All I can say is who would have ever guessed that Obama would beat odds of ten million-to-one, especially when it was twelve times more likely that he would have drowned in a bathtub somewhere along the way?

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An Unbalanced President

☒ President Obama has probably repeated the phrase “balanced approach” when talking about budget and deficit solutions, over 100 times at this point. If you just listen to him saying that phrase over and over, you probably think that he is interested in raising some taxes, as well as cutting spending to solve our country's debt problem. Perhaps he should play the tape back to himself, so that he can be convinced that the country needs a balanced approach to the

problem that we find ourselves in. Fresh off getting a deal with Republicans around New Year's that was exclusively tax increases, you would think that in order to obtain "balance", spending cuts would be front and center. Instead this unbalanced President seems to have a case of amnesia, or worse, when it comes to the tax increase deal. He wants to act as if it never happened, and start with a "new balance". The good news is Republicans can remember three months back.

When you want people to come your way in a negotiation, you try your best to be reasonable before the negotiations begin. Talk in generalities, and say things like "I know we can make a deal". You don't want to impugn the motives of your adversaries, because it will be that much harder to make a deal. This is vital in a public negotiation in order for all parties to claim victory, and not get resentful of the person they must strike a deal with. Then if discussions break down, you can claim that you were looking for a deal, and were reasonable all throughout the process. This approach allows you to claim credit for being honorable, and if you disparage your opponents, others will understand.

This President takes the exact opposite approach to what should be done. First, he makes his position public. This leaves little room for compromise without someone looking like they've lost. He then publicly attempts to bully his opponents into changing their stance. If that doesn't work he goes out on the campaign trail to try to get the public to push his agenda. After this scorched earth policy doesn't work, he resigns himself to trying to appear reasonable. This is completely unbelievable to his negotiating partners after they have been raked over the coals. Either he is the worst negotiator to ever sit in the White House, or he is unstable.

This past week there was the reconciliation phase of this reverse negotiation. The news was lit up with Presidential meetings and dinners with Republicans. Did any of those Republicans ask the President during dinner why he accused

them of not caring about: children's daycare; women's mammograms; or seniors' healthcare? Did they mention that they didn't appreciate being blamed for the sequester (spending cuts), which was his idea? Did they ask why he demonizes their point of view that less government helps those in need? Probably not. They also probably weren't forced into another tax increase just because they received a nice dinner.

If we combined the agreements over the fiscal cliff and the sequester, there would be no doubt that a balanced accord was reached. Somehow separating these two events by a mere 60 days has created a lack of balance in the President's mind. Mr. Obama is not only dishonest, he is a dishonest broker.

The President Can't Govern

✘ The President's history of negotiations with Republicans has led to the remarkable feat of making Washington DC even more dysfunctional. The President has behaved as if the country is split roughly 80-20 in his favor. Through his negotiations and public pronouncements he has exploited every opportunity where he has had even the slightest advantage. This has led to the Republicans slowly but surely coming to the conclusion that they can't trust him and almost can't work with him. This is the man we have just elected for 4 more years.

Politics is like a sporting event, but governing is more like a business. Much like sports, winning by 1 point (or getting 50.6% of the vote in the recent election) gets the victory. After the campaign the dynamics change almost immediately. The winner needs to start working with the party that he just

defeated in order to govern. The rare exception to this rule came in 2009 when Mr. Obama was working with a majority in the House, as well as a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate of his own party. This allowed him to govern without regard to the Republican point of view. This situation lasted for 2 years, and the country received Obamacare as a gift from one party rule. The next election in 2010 was historic in sweeping Republicans back into power in the House, and restored the balance that requires governing like a business.

In a company there are always conflicts between competing ideas or departments. It is through the negotiations over these competing ideas that people learn about their ability to deal with those who oppose them. Does the person push every advantage they have or do they realize that a win-win on an idea will help the company? Unless someone is fired over the disagreement, these two parties must figure out how to work with each other. This is not that different from the negotiations that must take place in Washington over completely different ideas of how government should work. This is not new, but the inability of the current President to seek win-win scenarios is.

A perfect example of this is the recent negotiations over the fiscal cliff, which occurred at the beginning of the year. This was a scenario where the President had the most leverage, in that, if nothing was resolved every person who paid taxes was going to see an increase. In the run-up to the final deal there were many ideas floated to cut spending. Replacing the sequester with other cuts, changing the rate of increase for entitlements, means testing Medicare, or raising the eligibility age for Social Security were all possible. The President, however, used the fact that he had all of the leverage, and allowed none of it. He made the Republicans swallow hard on a deal that only contained tax increases, extending unemployment, and with zero cuts in spending. He won.

There is a different dynamic now in place with the sequester. If nothing is done, spending will be cut, so the leverage is now with the Republicans. Has the President acknowledged that he needs to deal with the republicans, and been humbled by his lack of leverage? No. He has decided that he likes it better when the negotiations are winner-take-all, like an election. This is why in recent weeks, rather than negotiating, he has been campaigning. These campaign stops have been just like an election with staged events, human props, and scare tactics. He is doing this even though the most recent election results show that we are roughly a 50-50 country, and his opponents can't be fired for nearly 2 years.

The President enjoys sports, and as proof we will soon be subjected to the Presidential Bracket with the start of the NCAA Basketball Tournament (a tradition he began). He, however, has almost no experience dealing with coequals in business. He was elected to govern, and he simply can't do it. To come to this conclusion a little over a month into his second four year term is a bit disconcerting. Years from now, perhaps when the looming debt crisis is upon us, people will look back on this time and say that we should have solved the problem of our mounting debt. Perhaps with the passage of time the people will finally point the finger at this President.

Plotting the Future of California's GOP

Last month, I was invited to be on a panel at the bi-annual convention of the California Congress of Republicans. This isn't just a gathering of like-minded conservatives. These are

political activists whose lives are built around actually trying to wage successful campaigns in a state so blue, it could be renamed East Hawaii.

In case you're unaware, this is the place where the Democrats hold super majorities in both the state senate and the state assembly. This is the place that Dianne Feinstein, Barbara Boxer, Henry Waxman, Brad Sherman and Maxine Waters, call home. We're the cuckoo nest that decided that the only thing better than having a young Jerry Brown as our governor was having an old Jerry Brown.

The folks who show up at these conventions are nice people, but they are so divorced from reality that they actually believe they can win elections if they simply make 10 more phone calls or knock on 10 more doors at election time. And the truth is, they can. But only if they're outside the large urban areas on the coast, which just happens to be where most of us live.

The way I look at it, they're not hurting anyone and everybody needs a hobby. It's sort of like the arts and crafts classes they have at the asylum. The activities aren't going to cure the inmates, but it keeps them occupied. So it is that while the crackpots stay busy making lanyards and pot holders, California Republicans hold conventions.

The panel consisted of five politicians and me. I figured I had them out-numbered.

In my opening statement, I said, "When I heard I'd be up here surrounded by politicians, I figured I might have to use a crow bar in order to get a word in edgewise. So I better get it all said up front.

"There may have been a few California Republicans who couldn't make it today because of the lousy weather, but it seems to me that most of us are in this room. Hard to believe that when I was young, California was a conservative state. What's more,

the L.A. Times was a conservative newspaper.

“When I heard Dick Morris tell Bill O’Reilly a few years ago that Meg Whitman and Carly Fiorina were locks to win their elections against Jerry Brown and Barbara Boxer, I began trying to track him down. I didn’t want to set him straight, you understand; I just wanted to get a bet down.

“The fact is, I was convinced that Mitt Romney was going to defeat Barack Obama up until the time I heard Morris agreeing with me.

“The trouble in California is the trouble with America. Most voters are dumb and lazy and are either getting goodies from the liberals or hope to get them. And it certainly doesn’t help that the Left controls the message because they control the mass media. There is at least a partial solution. Instead of sinking millions of dollars into her own ill-fated campaign, Meg Whitman should have been buying up newspapers and local TV stations. Frankly, with the state senate and state assembly in the hands of left-wing super majorities, I couldn’t even imagine why she wanted to be the governor of California.

“People such as the Koch brothers and Sheldon Adelson should be doing the same thing on a national basis. I’m not suggesting they’d be able to pick up ABC, NBC and CBS, but there are plenty of other media outlets they could buy up and control, including those targeting Hispanic and Asian voters. Adelson, who wasted millions of dollars bankrolling Newt Gingrich’s ill-fated bid for the GOP nomination, owns the Sands and is worth approximately \$22 billion. He does own a newspaper, by the way. Unfortunately, it’s the HaYom, in Israel.

“On a national level, the GOP is so dumb that they don’t even take advantage of the fact that the Democrats allow a couple of stiffs like Harry Reid, a man born to oversee funeral

arrangements, and Nancy Pelosi, who's had so much plastic surgery, even her dog no longer recognizes her, be the face of their party.

"But what does our side do? Instead of counterpunching by making use of such smart and personable people as Paul Ryan, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and John Thune, by having them front for our side, we wind up with John Boehner and Mitch McConnell. Now, behind closed doors, they may be two very savvy guys. I wouldn't know. But in a world where image counts for a great deal, they are about as appealing as chicken pox.

"With the GOP, our motto seems to be: God forbid we ever take advantage of an advantage.

"Even when we had control of the White House and the two houses of Congress, from 2001-2007, we did almost nothing to promote a conservative agenda. Instead, we behaved like a bunch of giggly high school girls hoping that the starting quarterback, aka Ted Kennedy, would invite us to the prom.

"When it comes to strategy, it's as if the Democrats are playing in the major leagues and the Republicans are like kids goofing around in a sandlot. That's why the best we do when we somehow manage to win national elections, is to half-heartedly apply the brakes. Alas, that means that when the Democrats inevitably stage a comeback, they get to pick up exactly where they left off.

"I mean, we controlled the works for six long years and we never even tried to head off ObamaCare by applying a little commonsense to the problem of health care in America. Did we allow people to buy insurance across state borders? We did not. Did we initiate tort reform in order to safeguard doctors against nuisance suits brought by ambulance chasers? Of course not. I mean, why would we want to offend trial lawyers, who are probably the fourth most generous benefactors to the Democratic Party, trailing only unions, Hollywood nitwits and

George Soros!

“I hate to come off as the Grim Reaper, but I’m afraid the GOP has a bleak future in California. Unfortunately, there are sizable blocs of California voters – Hispanics, blacks, Asians, Jews, feminists, gays and college students – who have, for a variety of mainly venal reasons, found their home in the other party. And the fact is, habits, let alone addictions, are tough to break.

“In case it escaped everyone’s notice, in the 2012 presidential election, the positive news in California was that Obama received 420,000 fewer votes than he garnered in 2008. The really depressing news is that even after the state barely survived four years of this menace in the White House, Mitt Romney received 200,000 fewer votes than John McCain!

“But, in the spirit of the occasion, I will try to end this address on a high note. The truth is that things, even here in California, are not entirely hopeless.

“For instance, if that huge earthquake we’ve been hearing about our entire lives finally hits, and manages to dump a 30 mile swath of western California in the Pacific, not only would this hotel have an ocean view, but we Republicans would never lose another election.”

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