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April 24, 2011

President Obama Is Wrong About America

Chad Stafko



President Obama is wrong. In his highly anticipated [deficit speech](#) at George Washington University recently, Obama spoke of Social Security and Medicare and stated, "We would not be a great country without these commitments."

Really? According to Obama then, America wasn't a great nation prior to 1935 and 1965, the years in which Social Security and Medicare were enacted.

So, for nearly 200 years (1776-1965), America was not a great nation in the eyes of the 44th

President of the United States. Presidents Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln were among those who led a good nation, perhaps, but not a great one in Obama's eyes. Despite our growth from an infant republic in 1776 to the dominant nation of the world by mid-20th century, a period which included victories in two world wars, along with massive technological, industrial, and medical advances, still we were not a great nation according to Obama.

Attempting to calculate the impact America has had upon the rest of the world and to the betterment of the human race would be an exercise in futility, even prior to Social Security and Medicare. Countless lives have been saved through American medical advancements and breakthroughs. Production methods have been created and enhanced by American ingenuity and technological innovations, largely from Americans, have transformed the methods and speed by which we communicate around the world.

These are but a few accomplishments and defining qualities that have made America great.

It is these advancements and the potential for increased quality of life that has attracted and continues to entice so many to the United States. From 1850-1950, for example, 37 million individuals emigrated to the United States of America. They did not come to America seeking government programs. America provided opportunity to seek "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Therein is the greatness of America-opportunity. It is opportunity to accomplish more than in any other country.

Sadly, President Obama does not define the greatness of America by the opportunities afforded in this country nor by its people, and that's what is disturbing by his comments.

Instead, Obama defines American greatness by government. He cites Social Security and Medicare, two government programs that are inefficient and costly to the American taxpayer to the tune of 35% of the federal budget.

Social Security continues to have less and less taxpayers funding the program as a proportion of those benefiting from it, which is hardly a model for success. In 1950, there were about 16 workers paying taxes into Social Security for every retiree. The ratio today is about 3-1 and it continues to decline.

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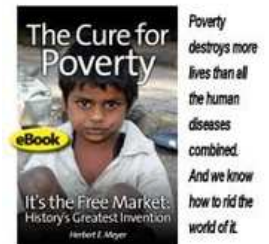
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So much so that the Cato Institute [estimates](#) the ratio will be about 2-1 as Baby Boomers retire and that the actual Social Security payment tax of 12.4% will have to rise to 18% at some point to continue funding retirement benefits. This is far from a program to boast about based upon those numbers, yet Obama says it makes our nation great.

Medicare is also far from a crown jewel of our nation. Andrew Biggs of the American Enterprise Institute [recently told](#) Fox News, "Medicare's long term deficit is somewhere around 85 trillion dollars."

That's not its cost; it is the difference between money in and money out. Yet, like Social Security, Obama hails Medicare as a government program that adds to the greatness of our nation.

Why, then would President Barack Obama mention two financially disastrous programs as evidence of America's greatness? It's simple. Obama is a liberal. Greatness, in the eyes of liberals, is defined as apparent compassion upon the less fortunate, regardless of the actual results of the government program in question. The level of burden upon those funding such programs is also irrelevant, just so long as some minimal benefits are given to certain groups of people.

So, Mr. President, you stand corrected! What makes America great is its people, achievements, and opportunities present within its borders...not its government programs.

Chad Stafko is a writer and political consultant living in the Midwest. He can be reached at stafko@msn.com

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