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Obama's Miserable Economy Needs More Scrutiny

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May 18, 2016

This past week brought more discouraging news about the U.S. economy. First quarter growth was 0.5 percent, a figure dangerously close to another recession and total job growth for April came in at 160,000, far below expectations. A real opposition party dedicated to retaking the White House would have been all over this, criticizing the Administration's pathetic economic record and promising major changes to get America moving again.

With the newest revelations that the millennia media rolled over and let Obama scratch their undersides, it's for sure these leftwing sycophants will tell a tale of lollipops, milk and honey and not the truth. But the reality is this economy is \$1.6 trillion behind a normal recovery, according to economist Steve Moore. And the national mood, in the phrase of the average millennial, "sucks."

So let's have a look at this Administration's sick joke-like economic performance. We are in the seventh year of an economic "recovery" which is the worst of any recovery since World War II. In his first two years, President Obama had overwhelming majorities in Congress and used those majorities to "transform" (he is after all a "transformative" president) the American economy through a trillion dollar stimulus plan, government directed investments in "clean energy" and new federal regulatory regimes to oversee the financial and health care industries. What has that brought us?

Sadly, under Obama, economic growth has averaged 2.2 percent since the recession that he inherited ended in June, 2009. For the last three quarters ending in March of 2016, the gain is a measly 1.3 percent. This is not an arcane discussion. Economic growth of at least 3 percent is necessary to keep unemployment steady, fund the federal government's commitments and maintain entitlement programs that millions of Americans depend upon. If, as Mitt Romney noted in 2012, 47 percent of the country has some claim on federal resources, shouldn't the Administration at least implement economic policies to stabilize those programs? No wonder a majority of Americans think we are still in a recession.

In every measurable way, from real wages to home values to America's optimism, Reagan's robust recovery makes Obama's look pathetic, flaccid and meager. No wonder Obama made some snarky comments the other day about Reagan's economic successes, because he sure can't argue the facts.

He surely can't argue that new discoveries of oil and natural gas are because of him, since he's argued against new explorations since he first took possession of the White House.

Another sad result is that job growth for the seven years of the Obama "recovery" has totaled 11 million new net jobs, roughly an 8 percent increase for all of the last seven years. While the unemployment rate has fallen to 5 percent, the labor force participation rate stood at 63 percent

in March, or fully 2.5 percent LOWER than when the last recession ended. Millions of Americans have stopped looking for work. Perhaps the Administration believes they should be content with the record amount of food stamps the government now gives out.

Different economic policies CAN make a big difference. Just look at the free market approach of President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s who emphasized tax cuts, lower federal expenditures, a restrictive monetary policy, and less burdensome government regulations. Reagan also dealt with a recession early in his first term, but tracking the beginning of the Reagan Recovery in January, 1983 tells a far different story. For the last six years of Reagan's presidency, economic growth averaged 4.9 percent, more than double Obama's figures. Growth never averaged less than 3 percent in any year and exceeded 6.5 percent for the first two years of the Reagan Recovery, numbers that Obama has never approached.

Liberal economists like to sneak in the statics of 1981 and 1982 to damage Reagan's reputation, but he and the country were still suffering the effects of the Carter Recession, brought on by his malaise of high inflation, high interest rates and high unemployment. And in the four years in which he ruined America's economy, Carter took to the national airwaves to blame the American people, not himself. Indeed, the U.S. government used to run television commercials blaming high inflation on "piggy people" rather than their loose money policies.

Job creation was also far stronger. Net new jobs for Reagan's last six years totaled an astounding 18 million, or a growth of 20.5 percent from the job base of 87.7 million in January, 1983. In other words, the Reagan Recovery created 7 million more jobs than Obama has in an economy that was a third smaller. Reagan created far more jobs than Obama, with nearly one third less labor force. Given the size of the labor force, it should have been easy for Obama to create more jobs, until one is reminded that Reagan's major at Eureka was economics. Perhaps an economics major at Eureka is worth more than a degree at Yale.

Reagan left office with an unemployment rate of 5.4 percent or 0.4 percent higher than the current level. However, the labor force participation rate had risen to 66.5 percent, 1.6 percent higher than the 1983 recession levels and fully 3.5 percent higher than today's rate. John Kennedy coined the phrase "A rising tide lifts all boats" but it was under Reagan that household income increased by \$4,000, rather than the no growth before Reagan, according to the Cato Institute. Even after Reagan left office, his policies continued under Newt Gingrich as the GOP congress balanced the budget and produced even more remarkable job growth, thanks again to Reaganomics.

In every measurable category, then, the Reagan free market policies have run rings around Obama's top down, corrupt government approach. Two percent growth may be the best Obama can do. Reagan proved that it is certainly not the best America can do.

It's too bad we don't have an opposition party that can tell THAT story to the American people.