



Disarming and alarming

By John Grant
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President Obama's budget recently hit Capitol Hill, and the good news is that it is dead on arrival, thanks to the House of Representatives. The bad news is that it clearly shows the agenda of the Oval Office.

It is both disarming and alarming, all \$4 trillion of it. As he looks for ways to pay for massive domestic spending, other than using the federal credit card, he has decided to take a meat cleaver to the Pentagon and slash the size of the Army to its lowest levels since before World War II.

Although his party hailed the budget, it just shows how out of step they are with American public opinion. According to the latest poll, less than a third of Americans favor cutting the military budget.

I am sure the decision to so drastically cut the defense budget was an easy one to make inside the Obama White House, where it seems there is no one who understands the international dangers we face. The factory worker in Michigan, the cab driver in New Jersey and the farmer in Indiana seem to have a greater understanding.

President Teddy Roosevelt said we should "speak softly and carry a big stick," but our current president is sending the big stick to a federal garage sale.

The budget is also alarming and his worst one yet. On the domestic side, what isn't funded by stealing from the military is funded by a \$1 trillion deficit that will take the national debt to \$18 trillion. Just to put that into perspective, consider that \$1 trillion is one million million. If they made one million dollar bills, a whole bathtub worth of them wouldn't equal a trillion dollars.

But worse than the deficit, the budget is a great wealth equalization package. An additional 13 million people would get "earned income credits." Translated, that means more people would get a check for not working.

One member of Congress spoke out in favor, saying these people would "now be free to stay at home and spend more time with their families." Excuse me! American productivity begins when people get up in the morning and exit their front door, not stay behind it.

The president is doing a disservice to the people he is allegedly trying to help. These massive transfer payments are not sustainable in the long term. Wealth equalization simply does not work

in a free-enterprise economy. Deficit spending will bring the national economy to a halt, if it continues unabated, and then everyone loses.

The American work ethic, for individuals and business alike, says that you strive to do your best, work your hardest and be as productive as possible.

But wealth redistribution stifles initiative, especially when able-bodied people can take free federal cash to stay home, making more than if they worked up a sweat on their brow, making less money and having to pay tax on it.

Folks, it's real. According to the Cato Institute, welfare benefits pay out more than a minimum-wage job in at least 35 states. According to Cato, in 13 states the payout is more than \$15 an hour.

And even more shocking is that if someone were to draw all of the welfare benefits they are "entitled" to, their pay would be more than that of a newly college-educated teacher (burdened with student loan debt, no doubt) in 11 states.

The highest welfare-payout states pay more than \$20 an hour, and that's tax-free income, when hard-working people pay tax on their earnings.

And then the president hits every charity in America by reducing the charitable deduction. That will limit cash flowing into the charitable sector, which will limit charities' ability to do what Obama thinks government can do better.

Think about food banks, orphanages and Metropolitan Ministries. The list goes on. Who will fill the gap? Well, government, of course. That's Obama's ultimate goal — more government spending, more government control and more government employees.

The president's budget deserves a quick funeral, but not before people understand the real goals of the White House and the president's cronies in Congress.

Candidates running for Congress this year should make it clear to voters that they will go to Washington to demand accountability from government, cut waste in the budget, and ensure that our military is maintained at levels sufficient to guarantee the security of the American people.

In the words of former Sen. Connie Mack: "America needs less taxes, less government and more freedom."

That's my opinion, and I am sticking to it.

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