



ECONLOG PERMANENT LINK | FEBRUARY 9, 2011

Printable format for [http://econlog.econlib.org/archives/2011/02/my\\_mornings\\_web.html](http://econlog.econlib.org/archives/2011/02/my_mornings_web.html)

## **My Morning's Web Reading**

David Henderson

FAQ: Print Hints

---

I found a lot of good and informative pieces on the Web this morning and so, rather than pick one to highlight in depth, I'll name a few and say a little about, or quote a little from, each.

### Ivan Eland, "**Tear Down This Wall (of Fame): Reagan's Overrated Foreign Policy.**"

---

Despite his rhetoric of limiting government, Reagan presided over an increase in federal spending as a portion of GDP during his two terms. This contrasts with the administrations of Dwight Eisenhower and Bill Clinton, which reduced such spending as a percentage of GDP. Clinton even reduced federal spending per capita, the only president since Harry Truman to do so.

### Tad DeHaven, "**OMB Director Lew on the New Budget.**"

---

The title of the piece, "The Easy Cuts Are Behind Us," is a real head-scratcher. Lew's "easy cuts" are an apparent reference to the \$20 billion in savings the president proposed in his previous budgets. Considering that the president proposed total spending of \$3.8 trillion last year, \$20 billion in gross cuts was an insignificant gesture to say the least. In reality, the Bush administration passed the spending baton to the Obama administration two years ago and it promptly sprinted off like Usain Bolt.

### Neal McCluskey, "**GAO Confirms It Did Nothing Wrong and It's None of Your Business.**"

GAO stands for Government Accountability Office. What's the best way to teach people to be accountable? Any good parent or teacher knows: model that behavior yourself. McCluskey shows that the GAO didn't do so when it made a major mistake. All the links in his piece are worth following. One highlight from the [GAO's press release](#):

---

Our goal is to never have to issue revisions. As a result of this internal review we are immediately implementing the reviewers' recommendations to tighten up our process to ensure such issues do not occur again.

---

If your goal is "to never have to issue revisions," think of the lengths you'll go to not to issue revisions. Of course, the GAO wants you to think the only margin on which it will adjust is the quality of its reports. It may well do that, but it will adjust on other margins too, like covering up. It's interesting that it won't reveal the results of its internal investigation.

### S.M. Oliva, "**The FTC vs. the FTC.**"

---

The Federal Trade Commission has two principal components: the Bureau of Competition and the Bureau of Consumer Protection. These bureaus have seemingly contradictory objectives. The "competition" side of the FTC complains when there are too few firms in a given industry vying to serve customers. Meanwhile, the "consumer-protection" side works frantically to reduce the number of firms by presuming a one-size-fits-all vision of what the hypothetical consumer should want.

---

TRACKBACKS (0 to date)

TrackBack URL: <http://econlog.econlib.org/mt/mt-tb.cgi/4632>

[Return to top](#)

---

Copyright © 2003-2010

Liberty Fund, Inc.

All Rights Reserved. Not for redistribution. For reprint information, contact the [webmaster@econlib.org](mailto:webmaster@econlib.org)