

Essential Tools    Smart Reads



Dow Jones Reprints: This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers, use the Order Reprints tool at the bottom of any article or visit [www.djreprints.com](http://www.djreprints.com)

See a sample reprint in PDF format.

Order a reprint of this article now

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

WSJ.com

LETTERS | JANUARY 28, 2010, 6:17 P.M. ET

## Where Was Karl Rove During GOP's Binge?

Annual average real spending grew faster under President George W. Bush than any president since Lyndon Johnson. So Bush adviser Karl Rove has chutzpah to complain about President Obama's profligacy in op-eds "[Obama's Fiscal Fantasy World](#)" (Jan. 7) and "Obama Versus Bush on Spending" (Jan. 21). Even leaving out defense, President Bush was the biggest spender since Republican Richard Nixon.

Mr. Rove defines Mr. Bush's term in office to include only his first seven years. Well, overall nominal spending jumped 60% during that period, or more than twice the 27% increase under Democrat Bill Clinton.

Of course, Mr. Rove is right that independent voters are unhappy with Mr. Obama's spending spree. But they are also sick and tired of Republicans complaining about big-spending Democrats but offering no spending cuts of their own. While some up-and-coming GOP members, such as Rep. Paul Ryan, have the guts to propose detailed budget reform plans, most Republican leaders seem to be in the same "fiscal fantasy world" as Mr. Obama.

I'm scared that independents, tea party activists and other reform-minded voters will help put the Republicans back in power, and then big-spending GOP leaders and political advisers will champion more interventionist schemes like the Bush-Rove doubling of K-12 education outlays.

**Chris Edwards**

Cato Institute

*Washington*

Copyright 2009 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our [Subscriber Agreement](#) and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit [www.djreprints.com](http://www.djreprints.com)