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## Mitch Daniels' fiscal conservative credentials

Thu, 02/24/2011 - 6:30pm | posted by Jason Pye

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Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels is talking tough on spending, as is nearly every potential GOP candidate for president. Nearly two weeks ago at CPAC, Daniels dubbed the deficit the new "red scare" in a speech that raised eyebrows of many Republicans.

But as Alex Knapp notes, Daniels credibility is lacking:

*Looking at the Republican field for 2012, I'm more than a little disheartened that the most prudent and fiscally conservative contender for the Republican nomination is Mitch Daniels.*

*The same Mitch Daniels who, as director of OMB, oversaw a federal budget that went from a \$236 billion surplus to a \$400 billion deficit.*

*The same Mitch Daniels who stated that the cost of the Iraq War would be "only about \$50-60 billion." (Actual cost to date — over \$800 billion and climbing.)*

*Ugh.*

*Now, I'll be fair. I'm only now starting to look at Mitch Daniels. I haven't had a chance to review his record as Governor. Maybe it's an improvement.*

*But in the past few weeks I've heard him banded about as the "fiscally conservative" candidate, and I have to say the first time I heard that, I laughed.*

In fairness, Daniels has received decent marks on fiscal policy as Governor of Indiana. But his mention of a value added tax (VAT) and a higher gas tax as a potential policy solutions are concerning. Also, Daniels may have made spending policy suggestions to President Bush, and he may have just ignored it. But supporting someone for president that came of the Bush Administration or supported his domestic spending policies is a tough sell for any real fiscal conservative.

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