

## In Obama's '1984'-Speak, Unemployment Is A Plus

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**Economy:** Failed presidents always come up with excuses, but Obama spinmeister Valerie Jarrett has repeated a White House play that takes the cake. In true "1984" style, she says bad times are really good.

One of George Orwell's most chilling images was that of a totalitarian government that succeeded in convincing people their oppressed existence was the opposite of what it was.

"War is Peace," the ruling party insisted in Orwell's novel 1984, "Freedom is Slavery" and "Ignorance is Strength."

On Tuesday evening, speaking in Durham, N.C., White House adviser and close Chicago friend of the Obamas Valerie Jarrett took the argument that government spending is "good for the economy" to a new level.

Referring to unemployment benefits, Jarrett contended that "people who receive that unemployment check go out and spend it and help stimulate the economy," which is "healthy" for the economy.

Being such an insult to the millions of Americans now seeking work, Jarrett's claim has attracted plenty of attention. But it's nothing new for this White House.

Last summer, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney lectured Wall Street Journal reporter Laura Meckler for not knowing it "as part of the entrance exam" that jobless benefits are "one of the most direct ways to infuse money directly into the economy because people who are unemployed and obviously aren't running a paycheck are going to spend the money that they get."

Carney contended that "every place that that money is spent has added business, and that creates growth and income for businesses that leads them to decisions about jobs, more hiring."

So add to the Orwell list of government-dictated absurdities, "unemployment is employment."

As we noted last August after Carney touted joblessness as a pro-growth policy, by Obama's logic expanding the welfare rolls should bring on a private-sector boom generating millions of new jobs.

But Jarrett's echoing of Carney indicates this to be the official Obama line. We know from Ron Suskind's book "Confidence Men" that former White House economic advisers Lawrence Summers and Christina Romer were both "startled" to discover that Obama believed "high unemployment was due to productivity gains in the economy."

"We both tried to convince him otherwise," Romer said. " He wouldn't budge."

This is blind faith in John Maynard Keynes' theory of the power of government spending taken to a new ignorant extreme.

As Newsweek columnist Jonathan Alter's book-length love letter to Obama, "The Promise," notes, the administration and congressional Democrats were being advised by economists in 2009 that "almost any spending" would fire up the economy.

"In a recession even the worst kind of boondoggle is stimulative," as Alter described the thinking.

So President Obama, during the two years his party had complete control of both houses of Congress, spent and spent and spent, adding trillions of dollars to the debt.

As Cato Institute senior fellow Michael Tanner noted last week in National Review Online, "the president's budget adds \$6.7 trillion to the national debt over the next 10 years, bringing it to nearly \$25.5 trillion by 2022. That would be more than 100% of our GDP."

But Obama "stops counting after 2022, about the time that the costs of entitlements such as Medicare and Social Security really begin to kick in, and his proposed budget does almost nothing to reform these troubled programs."

Faced with the reality that the massive spending hasn't worked, and that Americans are suffering what the Congressional Budget Office calls "the longest stretch of high unemployment in this country since the Great Depression," Obama's spin doctors turn to Orwellian mistruths about economic reality.

As Valerie Jarrett says, not having a job is actually "healthy." She may find out in November if that's true.