

The Washington Post

The reaction to the VP debate

William D. Hartung, New York – October 13th, 2012

The Post noted that Rep. Paul Ryan attempted to use the occasion to display his "mastery of fiscal policy." If that was his intent, he failed miserably.

On taxes, Mr. Ryan refused to disclose which tax deductions a Romney administration would eliminate in order to make up for its \$5 trillion in proposed tax cuts over the next 10 years. Absent that information, there is no way of knowing whether the Romney-Ryan tax plan adds up or who would bear the burden of making up for the tax cut by giving up their own favored deductions.

On the spending side, Mr. Ryan denied that his ticket would increase Pentagon spending by \$2 trillion over the next 10 years, despite the fact that analyses by the Cato Institute and the Center for a New American Security have demonstrated that Mitt Romney's plan to put Defense Department expenditures at 4 percent of gross domestic product would do just that.

By withholding key information on taxes and misstating the Romney-Ryan position on Pentagon spending, Mr. Ryan raised a critical question: Is he intentionally trying to mislead us, or does he not understand basic arithmetic?