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**PERMANENT LINK** | OCTOBER 21, 2009

**Health Reform and Vietnam**  
Arnold Kling

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**Michael Cannon writes,**

Massachusetts also demonstrates that compulsory health insurance enables, and ultimately requires, politicians and government bureaus to control nearly all aspects of health care and medical practice.

Lately, I've been thinking about Vietnam analogies. For example, mandatory health insurance is kind of like the draft. Forcing us to do our duty.

I also think that maybe the Obama Administration does not really care about the contents of the reform legislation. It's their Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, that will allow them enough leeway to do whatever they want. After all, if you can use TARP for auto companies, if the Secretary of Energy can use government guaranteed loans to anoint the electric car the winning technology, if the FTC can regulate how bloggers talk about products without any law ever mandating such regulation, if the stimulus is just one big slush fund, where do we think there are going to be boundaries on administrative fiat with respect to health insurance, health regulation, or health care spending?

The best and the brightest see no limits to their ability to make our lives better through their exercise of power.

I do think that overspending will do them in. As far as government indebtedness goes, they are waist deep in the Big Muddy. The big fool says to push on.

CATEGORIES: Political Economy

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**Dr. T writes:**

"The best and the brightest see no limits to their ability to make our lives better through their exercise of power."

I see no intent to make our lives better. I see only intent to control. (Maybe your phrase was facetious.)

"I do think that overspending will do them in."

I see no evidence of this. People are getting frustrated because massive spending didn't fix unemployment, but I see little concern among the general public about overspending per se. The most concerned person I know is my 16-year-old daughter who (correctly) expects massive taxes when she starts her career. My adult family and friends worry more about other issues. I don't expect overspending to be a political issue until we reach the point where the US cannot borrow money.

Paul writes:

Half, or more of the TARP, through financial companies, or directly to foreign banks and central banks is off shore.

We can print, way way more, as the world and China will suck it up.

It will be a decade, or more, at this rate until we start doing a Wiemar or Zimbabwe.

Options? Continue until crash( fast or slow ). Massive raise taxes. Nope, Repubs will only go for slowly raising taxes.  
Cut spending and citizen buying. Neither party will do that.  
Back to plan A. Crash.

Posted October 21, 2009 8:22 PM

guthrie writes:

Dr. T,

While the real intent might be control, the administration and their supporters would never say as such outright... and some might even believe the hype.

"People who have no health insurance are \*suffering\* and it's up to the elite in government to exercise their power to alleviate this 'suffering'... whatever the cost (because how can you put a price on healthiwellness?)."

The display of sincerity might or might not be sincere, but it is what's on display.

Posted October 22, 2009 10:40 AM

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