

The Pompous Conservative Balances the Budget

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The Pompous Conservative: Oh My God! Oh My God!

The Average American (concerned): What is wrong?

The Pompous Conservative: Oh My God! Oh My God!

The Average American (more concerned): Are you OK? You look awful. What is wrong?

The Pompous Conservative: Obama is going to bankrupt the nation with his costly \$1 trillion "stimulus" plan. This is awful. Where is he going to get the money for this? We can't afford this! This will leave a terrible burden of debt to our children and grandchildren! I mean...what is he thinking! Where is he going to get the money for this?

The Average American: How about tax cuts?

The Pompous Conservative: Tax cuts! Are you nuts! Tax cuts reduce government revenues! How would tax cuts pay for Obama's stimulus plan?

The Average American (looking puzzled): Well, haven't you been telling me for eight years that President Bush's tax cuts pay for themselves? So what's the problem? Why don't we just cut taxes even more to fund the Obama stimulus plan?

The Pompous Conservative (sputtering): No, no, no. It doesn't work like that! You can't use tax cuts to pay for a stimulus plan?

The Average American: Why not?

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The Pompous Conservative: Er, um, well...look it is complicated and beyond your limited intelligence. Just trust me. Tax cuts are out. Look, we have to balance the budget for the first time since Clinton! How can we pay for a stimulus plan and balance the budget? There is no way!

The Average American: What about Iraq?

The Pompous Conservative: Iraq? I don't get it.

The Average American: Well, didn't you tell me that the Iraq war would pay for itself?

The Pompous Conservative: Er, um, well,...I did say that...

The Average American (triumphant): So we use the profits from stealing Iraq's oil to pay for the stimulus plan!

The Pompous Conservative (stunned): No, no, no! Look, first of all, that is unethical. We did not invade Iraq to steal their oil!

The Average American (confused): We didn't? But what was all that stuff about the war paying for itself because the American oil companies would do such a better job of running the Iraqi oil fields than Saddam and his Baathist henchmen?

The Pompous Conservative: No, no, no. Look, the traitorous unpatriotic liberal hippie activists sabotaged our plans to liberate Iraq by staging protests in New York, San Francisco, and other American cities. As a result of this liberal treason, the Iraq war didn't...er, um...pay for itself.

The Average American (nodding): Well, that may be true. But! Haven't you been telling me the Surge is working wonders?

The Pompous Conservative (nervously): Yes, of course! Did you know many of the treasonous liberals opposed the Surge?

The Average American (triumphant): If the Surge is working, then there is nothing standing in our way from making hundreds of billions of dollars from stealing Iraq's oil! We can fund the stimulus plan and save our economy...not to mention my job!

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The Pompous Conservative: No, no, no. That won't work!

The Average American: Why not? Sounds good to me.

The Pompous Conservative: Er, um, well...it will take years to rebuild Iraq's oil infrastructure now that we... excuse me, the terrorists have destroyed it.

The Average American: Really? Are you sure? I thought the media was reporting the Iraqi oil production is finally almost back to the level it was under Saddam after five years of war, thousands killed, and at least \$500 billion spent by the US. Let's get some return on our \$500 billion investment!

The Pompous Conservative: Look, we are getting off topic here. Let me assure you that we cannot use the money from Iraq's oil to fund the economic stimulus plan. We desperately need to balance the budget! We cannot afford an economic stimulus plan! What is Obama thinking? Where does he think we can get the money? Where are we going to find \$1 trillion.

The Average American (scratching his head): Well, how about we take back \$1 trillion of the four trillion or so that the Federal Reserve and the Treasury under Bernanke and Paulson have given to badly run banks like Citigroup?

(several seconds of silence)

The Pompous Conservative: Take back?

The Average American: Yes, take back. The Federal Reserve and the US Treasury have handed out almost four trillion dollars in the last year or so to dozens of giant banks and the economy has collapsed. Let's take the money back.

The Pompous Conservative: The government can't do that!

The Average American: Why not?

The Pompous Conservative: The four trillion dollars belongs to the banks! This is a capitalist society! We are talking about private property!

The Average American: Well, but the Federal Reserve and the Treasury gave the money to the banks to save the economy and they blew it. So why shouldn't the government take the money back?

The Pompous Conservative: Look, in a free market system, when the government gives a lot of money to a giant bank, it can't just take it back. The government has made a solemn promise to the banks. It would undermine the credit rating of the US if the government *took the money back just because the banks couldn't fix the economy with the money!*

The Average American: Well, didn't the banks make a solemn promise to fix the economy to get the money, especially the \$700 billion Wall Street bailout?

The Pompous Conservative: Rescue plan! It is a rescue plan. And, no, the banks did not make a solemn promise to fix the economy. What are you thinking? In the free market system, the government just gives money to the banks, no strings attached. Look, you just have to accept the reality here. You have been living beyond your means. We must balance the budget. There is no money for Obama's stimulus plan, especially with the economy, the war in Iraq, the war in Afghanistan, the war in Gaza, the war in Iran, the war in Venezuela, the war in... well, you get the idea. And, because of your profligate behavior, the banks will need several more trillion dollars to save the economy.

The Average American (shaking his head): Look, I still don't see why we can't take back one trillion dollars from the incompetent banks to pay for the stimulus plan. And another thing, if all these wars are so expensive and we absolutely have to balance the budget, why don't we end the wars?

The Pompous Conservative (aghast): End the wars? Are you insane? What about Osama bin Laden! He is still out there!

The Average American (puzzled): You know, you are always talking about efficiency, eliminating waste, cutting the fat, balancing the budget. Osama bin Laden is, last I heard, one guy with a bad kidney. What does one bullet cost? Ten cents?

The Pompous Conservative (defensively): Well, er, um, one hundred dollars with the usual Pentagon overhead, G&A, and other extra fees in the standard cost plus contracts.

The Average American: OK, so \$100 for the bullet and what \$30 K for some special forces guy's annual salary to find Osama and shoot him?

The Pompous Conservative: Look, now special operations are outsourced to Blackwater and the special forces guy costs \$1 million per year. I want to emphasize that the special forces guy only makes the minimum wage and he has to buy his own body armor. No more of this inefficient civil service stuff.

The Average American (incredulous): So what is the rest of the \$1 million for?

The Pompous Conservative: That pays for Blackwater's unique management and administrative services.

The Average American: Like what?

The Pompous Conservative: Someone has to tell the special forces guy to kill Osama Bin Laden. Just between you and me, these special forces guys aren't too bright.

The Average American: And that costs \$1 million? Are you sure you can't get some civil servant for \$50 K per year to tell the special forces guy to kill Osama Bin Laden?

The Pompous Conservative (aghast): Civil servants are all incompetent. This would be beyond their limited abilities.

The Average American (shrugs): Fine, so about \$1 million for one special forces guy to take out bin Laden.

The Pompous Conservative: Look, you've been watching too many James Bond movies. It doesn't work like that. We have already given Pakistan several billion dollars and they can't find him. We have spent over \$500 billion in Iraq and bin Laden is still a menace. Look, you just can't apply the same demanding financial standards that we conservatives apply to food stamps and other poverty programs to *war!*

The Average American: Why not?

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The Pompous Conservative (sputtering): Because we like war!
We don't like food stamps!

The Average American: Oh.

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