

Obama shoots for Mars

by *Larry_Elder*

President Barack Obama, on Tuesday night, gave his first presidential address before Congress. He looked good, sounded great, and delivered his address with poise and confidence. He entered the Capitol and made his way through the applauding throng like a modern-day Moses slowly parting the Red Sea.

The moment was certainly historic, and all Americans – or at least nearly all Americans – took pride in living in a country that went from a Constitution that defined a black as three-fifths of a person to one where a black person could be elected President of the United States. Some journey!

But when the applause died down, the President took out a scattergun and attempted to hit everything in sight. He confidently asserted his and our intention to overcome the current economic downturn and march toward an even brighter future.

How? Government/taxpayers will spend our way to the summit.

He/Congress/we will "invest" in health care and education; "save or create" 3.5 million jobs; "cure cancer within our lifetime"; provide assistance to the states; "save our planet from the ravages of climate change"; save banks and other financial institutions while holding "accountable those responsible" for their problems; increase the size of the military; end torture (presumably he meant of our enemies); and cut the size of the deficit.

What?! Nothing about crafting a college football playoff?

After the President's speech, the political commentators fell over themselves in complimenting the President. Many said things like "he aimed high," "he set out an ambitious agenda," and "he outlined a vigorous list of expected accomplishments."

Economist Thomas Sowell uses a three-pronged test to examine government's "new ideas." 1) How much will it cost? 2) Who pays? 3) Will it work? Few of the post-speech analysts seemed to care.

One waited in vain for the political experts to point out that the President's spending spree must come from somewhere – taxes or borrowing or printing.

And, as an aside, how would the press have reacted had former President George W. Bush claimed "as did Obama" that America "invented the automobile"?

Suppose Bush steered a shopping cart down the aisle, packed it with everything in sight that he could grab, pushed it to the cashier, and then said, "You mean I gotta pay?"

The President, on Tuesday night, promised to both lower taxes and raise taxes. He promised to both reduce spending and increase it. He promised to expand education while simultaneously claiming that education begins in the home. He promised to bail out homeowners "responsible" ones while insisting that Americans take responsibility for living beyond our means and making bad choices.

He promised to provide financial assistance to states while never mentioning the states' fiscal irresponsibility. He said, "There are 57 police officers who are still on the streets of Minneapolis tonight because this plan prevented the layoffs their department was about to make," yet said nothing about whether that state budgeted or spent responsibly.

He unilaterally abolished the notion that "there ain't no such thing as a free lunch." Under his administration, the free lunch not only exists, but government bureaucrats provide takeout or delivery.

The President, last night, mentioned no total price tag for all this largesse. He did say, however, that he intends to raise taxes on the 2 percent of Americans making more than \$250,000. Somehow he expects to burden "the rich" still more and not affect their behavior. Already, the top 1 percent pays nearly 40 percent of all federal income taxes.

The President, as he said during the campaign, promised to lower taxes on 95 percent of Americans. Of course, nearly 30 percent of working Americans pay zero in federal income taxes. But they, too, will get checks. And, Obama said to applause, the "checks are on the way."

The President sketched out a federal government grab larger than any in the history of our nation. His administration intends to bail out and oversee everything from banks to car manufacturers to lemonade stands.

Be not afraid about waste, mismanagement or politically directed spending. To ensure that our money is spent properly, the Obama administration intends to post the allocations on the Internet, ensuring wise and appropriate fund distribution.

Do those who voted against the President "want him to fail"? No, those who opposed the President want America to succeed. The formula for that success has a long and impressive track record: lower taxes, rein in government spending, and promote free trade. Let's put it another way: Remove government's boot from the neck of the American worker, businessperson and entrepreneur.

Set them free. Watch what happens.

Larry Elder is a syndicated radio talk show host and best-selling author. His latest book is "Stupid Black Men: How to Play the Race Card and Lose".

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