

Truth be told

by *Oliver_North*

WASHINGTON — Truth be told, Barack Obama may be the most charismatic and articulate public speaker in America today. Give him carefully crafted prose, well-wrapped applause lines, a teleprompter and an audience, and he will bring 'em to their feet, fired up, ready to charge the barricades. It is a gift, and he uses it well.

That's what he did in his first speech to a joint session of Congress and in presenting his budget. On Tuesday evening, I listened in my car so I wasn't distracted by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi jumping up every few seconds like a schoolgirl with ants in her pants. Nor could I see Joe, our vice president, semi-somnolently staring out into the crowd. On Thursday, I listened to Obama's speech again and then read the words he used after presenting the federal budget. That's why I conclude that truth be told, too often he isn't telling the truth.

Maybe it's not his fault. Perhaps 27-year-old Jon Favreau, his eloquent speechwriter, just doesn't know the facts or recognize "where have I heard those words before?" Here are a few examples of when Obama's words this week just didn't match what's right:

"We have known for decades that our survival depends on finding new sources of energy. Yet we import more oil today than ever before." The first sentence is spot on. The second sentence simply isn't true. Since 2005, U.S. oil imports have declined steadily, from a high of 5 billion barrels per year.

In defending hasty passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, he said, "A failure to act would have worsened our long-term deficit by assuring weak economic growth for years." But supposedly impartial economic analysis by the Congressional Budget Office predicts that the legislation likely will have a negative effect on long-term productivity and economic growth.

"The ability to get a loan is how you finance the purchase of everything from a home to a car to a college education, how stores stock their shelves, farms buy equipment, and businesses make payroll." For six decades, I've been doing it all wrong. In my family and business, our ability to do all those things has been based on what we could afford, not how much we could borrow. Because we have been frugal, we are going to be punished with higher taxes so that what we have earned can be given to people who refused to save for what they want.

"So I ask this Congress to join me in doing whatever proves necessary." Those unfamiliar with history may not recall that this was exactly what Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler asked their legislatures to do in creating National Socialism. In the midst of rising unemployment and economic crisis, both men asked for and got legislation to do what was "necessary" and promised new private-sector jobs would be generated by government-funded programs, new tax laws and novel "lending rules." It worked. Private companies did hire

workers to build rail systems and highways. They also invigorated auto industries and, in Germany, the most technologically advanced aircraft in the world. The rest is history we all know.

"In the midst of civil war, we laid railroad tracks from one coast to another that spurred commerce and industry." Not true. Our transcontinental railroad, arguably the greatest engineering feat of the 19th century, began in 1830 and was not completed until 1869, as a private-sector venture. The federal government's role was limited to "eminent domain" land seizures, authorizing the import of immigrant laborers, guaranteeing private bank loans, and approving the actions of administrators in federal territories.

"I believe the nation that invented the automobile cannot walk away from it." Great line, but wrong. The first "automobile" (a French word) was invented by Frenchman Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot in 1769. In 1862, French inventor Alphonse Beau de Rochas built a car powered by an internal-combustion engine. Karl Benz, a German, was issued the first patent for a "self-powered car," in 1886. Henry Ford was the first to mass-produce automobiles "starting in 1913" and he did it without any money from the U.S. government.

Mr. Obama said his budget "makes the largest investment ever in preventive care" (in order) to keep our people healthy and our costs under control." Polio, once deemed to be the No. 1 health threat in the U.S., was all but eliminated by Jonas Salk. Beginning in 1947, Salk conducted research at the University of Pittsburgh. The research was funded by private charity, not government.

"This budget supports (a) historic investment in education." But according to the UNESCO Global Education Digest, even before this "investment," the United States had the world's highest per capita spending on education "with just 4 percent of the world's children" and 28 percent of global education expenditures. Clearly, lack of money isn't the problem.

Mr. Obama said, "We're not paying for Cold War-era weapons systems we don't use." But if we don't buy ballistic missile defense, upgraded nuclear weapons, submarines, F-22s, F-35s, V-22s and aircraft carriers and replace equipment that's worn-out after eight years of war, how do we deter our adversaries or even fight back when we're attacked?

Truth be told, this isn't an "economic recovery budget." It is a Lyndon Johnson plan. In the midst of "crisis," a controversial war and an economic slowdown, we're being told that we need a massive expansion of the federal government, higher taxes, more debt for our children, and defense cuts that are tantamount to unilateral disarmament.

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