



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on August 15, 2011

Only National Collapse Will End America's Spending Problem

Just so you know, my solution to our spending woes would be to once again limit the central government to only that which our Constitution dictates it may do, which would cause its budget to immediately shrink by at least two-thirds — and probably far more. Of course, this would involve eliminating bureaucracies such as the Department of Education, Environmental Protection Agency, and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and programs such as Social Security and federally provided food stamps. There would be nothing to fear, either, as there is much duplication here; for example, states have their own environmental and education agencies and other bureaucracies/programs that render the feds' corresponding ones redundant. And why are we paying for two different levels of government to do the same thing? As for third-rail program Social Security, it could be devolved to the states, whose residents could then decide what its future would be.



Oh, this is unrealistic and will never happen, you say?

You're right.

And it was just as unrealistic to think that Republicans, who control only one-half of one-third of the government — and very little of the media, which shapes public opinion — would deliver a Tea Party plan in a spending-party culture. Remember, we can and must discuss how things *should* be, as I did above. But as Otto Von Bismarck said, "Politics is the art of the possible." And you make something possible politically by making it palatable culturally. Now let's discuss why fiscal responsibility isn't possible in modern America.

My father had an old friend whom I'll call "Sal." Sal was an affable fellow with an easygoing personality, and I had great affection for him. But he also had a serious gambling problem. He spent and spent and spent and incurred more and more debt, and do you know what finally cured him?

Bankruptcy.

He stopped spending when he could get no more credit. It didn't happen a moment sooner. Of course, by this point there was absolutely no chance that he'd be able to retire his mountain of debt. Meeting obligations, after all, isn't just about honor. It's also the art of the possible.



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As with Sal, America's fiscal default is inevitable. First, our national debt of \$14.7 trillion amounts to \$47,667 for each man, woman, and child in our nation. Is Johnny going to be able to write a check for that figure any time soon? Moreover, if you factor in future "obligations" (Social Security, military expenditures, etc.) and subtract expected revenues from them, the [shortfall](#) is a whopping \$211 trillion. This state is called "insolvency" — on steroids — and it means that the feds will ultimately default not just on foreign creditors but also on what it has "promised" to our fellow citizens. This is simply a fact — and no amount of head-in-sand wishing will change it.

As for efforts at austerity, they will be too little, too late. This is for a simple reason: Far too many of us are addicted to spending. And I'll illustrate my point.

If you ask Americans if they want smaller, leaner, less-expensive government, a majority will say yes. But if you then ask them if they're willing to relinquish *their piece of the pie*, you'll hear, "Whoa! Wait a second! Let's not get radical now!"

With rare exception, it's always the other guy's spending that's the problem.

It's always his goodies that need to be cut.

Ours are "necessary."

Now, with regard to SS, there at least is the reasoning that we should get back what we paid into the system plus interest. Of course, this is precisely how our foreign creditors feel about our debt to them.

You know, that unmanageable debt that we *will* eventually default on.

What is truly indicative of a lack of virtue, though, is that many Americans behave as if they deserve what are purely handouts. This is why we see students protesting when college aid is cut, union members protesting when taxpayers have the temerity to try to pare plum contracts down to something approximating a day's work for a day's pay, and New Yorkers protesting cuts in government-funded child care.

Of course, many will say that their preferred programs really are important. Well, guess what?

In certain cases, they may even be right.

But it doesn't matter. You see, as a child I was instilled with a radical notion: A prerequisite for getting something — no matter how important or how badly craved it is — is having the money. Yet today we have adults who don't grasp this principle. Instead, we saw Democrat legislators in [Wisconsin](#) and [Indiana](#) decide to run away rather than perform their legislative duties and vote on a budget, all because they wanted to spend more. We saw California facing bankruptcy, and its legislature still wanted to spend more. Democrat federal politicians and millions of their supporters witness America's credit rating downgraded for the first time in history.

And their answer is to spend more.

What part of THERE IS NO MONEY don't these people understand?

Unfortunately, humanity is driven by logic less often than we'd like to think. "You cannot reason a man out of a position he has not reasoned himself into," remarked Ben Franklin. As with Sal, these politicians and their supporters are driven by base urges, by intellect-clouding emotion that causes them to justify what feels right. In the case of the people, they simply want their free stuff. And is this rationalization so surprising? The film *Goodfellas* told one of a million stories about individuals who engaged in illegal theft simply because they could. Well, it's infinitely easier to justify the legal theft



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euphemistically called “wealth redistribution.” After all, you have the government middleman doing the dirty work. Your victims are nameless and faceless. You don’t have to hold a knife to their throats; you don’t have to hear their screams. And for the more sophisticated, we have pseudo-intellectual justifications such as the “social contract” and the “general welfare.” Actually, in a way, I respect a mugger on the corner more.

And the politicians? No one wants to be the heavy who stops the gravy train; no one wants to fall on his own austerity-plan sword. Oh, don’t blame them too much. The politicians who would actually be responsible, such as Alan Keyes, usually don’t make it into office. And the ones who do make it simply reflect the profligates who elect them — or, at least, are greatly outnumbered by such legislators. It’s the government we deserve.

We’ve heard much about entities “too big to fail,” but as the Central Government will one day prove, there is no such thing. The phrase simply means that they’re big enough to foist their failures on the rest of us and prolong the inevitable.

None of this is good news, of course, but I’ll conclude with a digression and mention a possible bright side. Once the money dries up and the feds are no longer paying the piper and calling the tune, perhaps we’ll see a true resurgence of states’ rights.



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