



Written by [Staff](#) on March 7, 2011

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## Inside Track

### Obama's Budget: A "Down Payment" With No Money Down



AP Images

President Obama labeled his 2012 budget proposal "a down payment toward a permanent fix" for the expected record deficit, but his fiscal 2012 budget proposal actually leaves deficits higher than his previous budget proposals.

The *New York Times* noted on February 14: "For the current fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, the Obama budget projects a deficit of more than \$1.6 trillion, the equivalent of nearly 11 percent of the gross domestic product; in those terms it would be the largest shortfall since World War II ended." President Obama has promised a falling deficit in the future, however. "If the projections are correct," the *New York Times* explained, "2012 will be the fourth and final year with a deficit over \$1 trillion." But that's a big "if." Obama's first budget proposal called for a \$912 billion deficit this year, compared with the \$1.6 trillion he now projects, and a \$581 billion deficit in 2012, compared with a \$1.1 trillion currently projected.

Much of the deficit reduction within Obama's budget is based upon a huge tax increase: the expiration of the Bush-era tax cuts. The *New York Times* explained, "The deficit for the next fiscal year, 2012, is expected to be smaller by more than \$500 billion, largely because of the expiration of those tax cuts and the two-year stimulus package that Mr. Obama signed into law soon after taking office."

Obama's projected spending increases have remained largely static over his 2010-12 budget proposals, despite all the talk of "cuts." Only in Washington is a "cut" not a cut. Only in Washington could a sentence like the following one — taken from Obama's Budget Message for the 2012 budget — be written without irony: "At the Department of Defense, for instance, we are reducing its funding by \$78 billion over the next 5 years on a course for zero real growth in funding."

Is zero real growth "reducing"? Only if you live in Washington. Of course, the Obama budget makes no attempt to ever — at any future date, no matter how distant — balance the budget. And this is despite the fact that the budget assumes several unrealistic hypotheticals: The Bush-era tax cuts "for the rich" (those making \$250,000 or more per year) will end, and economic growth will jump to more than four percent annually from 2012 through 2014.



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## Ron Paul Wins CPAC Straw Poll



Sam Antonio

For the second year in a row, Texas Congressman Ron Paul won the presidential straw poll at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), held this year February 10-12. The poll provides an indication of the ebb and flow of the conservative movement.

Last year's results revealed a surprising shift away from neoconservatism — the variant of “conservatism” that has dominated the establishment wing of the Republican Party — when Ron Paul defeated (among others) former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who was CPAC's reigning victor for every one of the three previous years.

Paul, who ran in the last presidential election campaign as “the champion of the Constitution,” won this year's straw poll with 30 percent of the vote. Romney again came in second, with 23 percent. The other prospective presidential candidates came in far behind, including former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson (6 percent), New Jersey Governor Chris Christie (6 percent), former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (5 percent), former Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty (4 percent), Minnesota Congresswoman Michele Bachmann (4 percent), Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels (4 percent), and former Alaska Governor Sarah Palin (3 percent). Only CPAC registrants were allowed to vote, and 3,742 ballots were cast. All 50 states plus the District of Columbia were represented in the straw poll.

Commenting on Ron Paul's win, Jeff Frazee of Young Americans for Liberty asserts, “The conservative establishment better recognize where the energy is or our movement will quickly become politically irrelevant. The next generation of political activists want honest, principled leadership. No more RINOs [Republicans in Name Only].”

Congressman Ron Paul has not yet announced whether he will once again throw his hat into the ring for President. His last presidential campaign, in 2008, helped launch the Tea Party movement and also made it popular for candidates to talk about the Constitution in their campaigns.

## Short-term PATRIOT Act Extension Sent to Obama as



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## Resistance Grows

Legislation extending key PATRIOT Act provisions set to expire on February 28 was sent to President Obama for his signature on February 17 (the day this magazine is going to the printer). Obama is expected to sign the bill, which will extend those provisions another three months, though the White House had earlier indicated its preference for extending the provisions through 2113.

In a surprising turn of events on February 8, the U.S. House of Representatives defeated the PATRIOT extension when it was brought up under a suspension of the rules that did not allow for any amendments but also required a two-thirds majority vote for passage. The GOP Party leadership expected the bill to pass with a two-thirds majority because they were backing it, but it didn't happen because a number of Republicans broke with their party leadership. According to *The Hill*, "More than two dozen Republicans bucked their leadership in the vote, by far the biggest defection for the House GOP since it took over the lower chamber. Until tonight's vote, Republicans voted together in all but two votes this year, and in those two votes, only one Republican voted with Democrats."

This defeat forced the House leadership to scramble and hold another vote on February 14, this time under rules requiring a simple majority. On this occasion, the House voted to extend the expiring provisions through December. The next day, the Senate voted for an extension of only three months — even though, as reported by the *Washington Post*, "The Senate had been considering several different proposals that would have extended the Patriot Act provisions permanently or through 2013." However, the *Post* noted, "The move [i.e., the short-term extension] is designed to buy time for lawmakers to fully debate and hold hearings on the controversial counterterrorism surveillance law." Two days later, the House voted to go along with the three-month extension, clearing the legislation but also setting the stage for another battle on the PATRIOT Act soon.

The PATRIOT Act allows FBI agents to write their own search warrants without approval of a judge, and allows the warrants to be open-ended without the specificity required by the Constitution's Fourth Amendment. During the Senate debate on the PATRIOT Act extension, Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who opposes the PATRIOT Act, lamented: "Now we have essentially government agents, akin to soldiers, writing warrants; it's ripe for abuse."

## Chinese Segregation: No Caucasian Mummies Need Apply





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## AP Images

The Chinese exhibition “Secrets of the Silk Road” ran without incident in California and Texas. But now Chinese authorities have decided that parts of it really must be kept secret and have ordered that some artifacts and, most notably, a certain mummy not be displayed. The news came as a blow to the Penn Museum in Philadelphia, which was poised to show the exhibition in toto starting February 5 and was informed of the change just the evening prior.

At issue is a 4,000-year-old mummy called the “Beauty of Xiaohe.” Remarkably well preserved, she has long eyelashes, half-open eyes and flowing hair. But then there is the distinction that may make her a political liability.

She’s Caucasian.

The mummy and other artifacts present the Chinese government with a problem because the remote part of western China in which they were found — the Tarim Basin in Xinjiang province — also has a distinction: It’s oil-rich and home to a separatist movement. And evidence that Europeans were the first to settle the region would weaken the Chinese’s historical claim to it. So the Beauty of Xiaohe has been taken into custody.

And it seems that an iron muzzle is in place, too. In reference to an article by the *Independent*, a commenter who attended the exhibition when it showed at California’s Bowers Museum reports the following:

A person asked the docent whether these people were Celtic, since everything looked it. The bright colours and plaids, blonde and red hair — everything shouted northern Europe. He stiffened a bit a [sic] recited the party line: All I can tell you is that genetically they are the same as the people on the far northwest coast of Europe, but I am not allowed to use any other designation for them.

Unfortunately, it isn’t unusual for history and science to be placed in the service of political agendas. The Japanese would at one time censor unflattering facts from their history textbooks. The Nazis did in fact, à la *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, launch expeditions to the Far East in an effort to prove that they were descended from a race of Aryan god-men. Then, of course, we have contemporary revisionist historians who would have us believe that the Founding Fathers were all ACLU-minded atheists and that, whatever their stripe, we’d be best off forgetting about them anyway because they’re nothing but dead Caucasian males.



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