



**Tea Party Resurgence:  
The Pursuit of a More Perfect  
Federal Government**

By  
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## *Dedication*

I dedicate this book to my mother, Sandra, and my late father, Jerry, who raised me with love and support, and instilled in me a great appreciation of being an American.

## *Acknowledgements*

I would like to extend a special thanks to the team at SBPRA. Throughout the process of getting this book published, Bruce Martin and the staff of SBPRA were nothing short of professional and supportive. The experience was not only fun, but was tremendously educational. I owe this publication to their unwavering assistance.

# PREFACE

Those who have known me for years would say that I am the last person who would write a book on a political topic. As a young person, I never closely followed politics and didn't identify with any particular political party. It was not until I was in my late twenties that I started to take a real interest in the issues of the world around me and question whether government policies were effectively addressing the problems they were designed to resolve. I now self-label as an unequivocal conservative, but I do hold some liberal social positions. I also do not allow factions of any political persuasion to impose their opinions on my personal values. I'll be the first to admit that I'm far from brilliant, but fortunately for me, developing solutions to our country's economic woes is not brain surgery, as Dr. Ben Carson would say.

I began writing this book out of a deep concern that the country I love so much, the country I am so proud of, and because the country I have served my entire adult life is in distress. I now have serious doubts whether future generations will enjoy the same opportunities I grew up with or even possess the same freedoms. Rather than apathetically entrusting the undertakings of preserving our nation and financial independence to a few hundred federally elected officials in our nation's capital, I feel that Americans are obligated to take active roles in this dire juncture of our history.

Sir Edmund Burke stated, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." The evil that I

am alluding to is not an individual or a collection of individuals, but a host of consequences. I believe the consequences of the United States plunging from its station as the world's sole superpower and becoming an irremediable debtor to nefarious nations would have evil repercussions on future Americans and the world. Good Americans simply cannot stand by and without a fight let their beloved country continue on its downward spiral.

I have no expectation that anything written in this book will change the minds of decision makers in Washington, DC, but then again, this book is not written for them. The target audience for this book is the informed voter who is concerned for the country's future and critically thinking constituents who know we can do better.

Despite the title, I will not proclaim that the few recommendations in this book will cure all of the country's fiscal ills. People may or may not agree with all of the opinions in the following chapters. If the content of this book generates honest debate, prompts others to produce their own original ideas, and encourages people to take active roles in compelling their elected representatives to effect positive change, then the intent of the book will be met. Staying the current course is not a feasible option.

# INTRODUCTION

## Our Near Perfect Country

*“The advice nearest to my heart and deepest in my conviction is that the Union of the States be cherished and perpetuated.”—James Madison*

In 2007, America was inspired by a presidential candidate who promised to fundamentally change America. Many of those who supported that message innocently thought that campaign pledge was a movement to make the United States of America a more perfect union. The question I pose to those supporters is, “More perfect for whom?”

The United States truly is a melting pot. It is the most diverse country in the world. America is comprised of citizens of different races, religions, creeds, and heritages, all living together in communities as neighbors and working together toward similar goals. What one person or group may consider perfect would not be perfect for another person or group.

Because of the heterogeneous makeup of its population with assorted tastes and opinions, America will never be a “perfect” union. Utopia is not a realistic goal. Not being perfect does not justify fundamentally changing anything. If it did, we’d all have to fundamentally change just about everything in our lives. Not being perfect does not equate to not being great.



Anyone who watches UN deliberations on C-SPAN or follows the international media can attest that the United States is a favorite target of the international community. However, it is the United States that many of these same grumbling countries turn to in times of crisis for leadership, protection, or assistance. Until very recently, the United States had been at the forefront of every major military confrontation to oppose international evil over the past century. When NATO forces targeted the Khadafi regime in Libya in 2011, US leadership was sorely missed by our NATO allies in the planning and execution of operations in the early stages of the campaign. In 2004, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) committed approximately \$575 million in tsunami relief for India, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. Though the United States had taken much criticism from home and abroad for waging a war of discrimination against Muslims, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world. In 2005, USAID committed more than \$300 million in assistance for earthquake relief to India and Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> At the time, significant political tensions existed with Pakistan as a result of peripheral issues surrounding its support of NATO operations in Afghanistan. Still, we as a nation provide comfort and humanitarian aid to those we disagree with in their times of need.

While other countries have built fences to keep their populations contained, the United States needs to build fences to keep the world from flooding across its borders for the chance to become Americans. America becoming a perfect union is an impossible dream. Nevertheless, to many who live within its borders as legal citizens, legal residents, or undocumented workers, America is the greatest country in the world.

So why would fundamentally changing the best country in the world appeal to so many Americans who were blessed

to be born here? It could be that striving for excellence is firmly embedded in the country's DNA. What made America the superpower it is today was the drive of our founders and subsequent generations to constantly improve and innovate.

Early Americans pushed west and built livelihoods for their families out of the wilderness using nothing but crude tools and backbreaking determination. American innovation has touched the lives of virtually every person on each continent with breakthroughs in the industrial, automotive, telecommunications, aeronautical, and medical fields, just to name a few. America fought a bloody civil war to correct sinful practices and ensure that all who lived within its borders would be treated equally under the law, with unalienable rights as described in the Declaration of Independence. America led the world in destroying Nazism and freeing countries from communism. On every continent live people who owe at least a portion of the freedom they enjoy today to sacrifices made by US servicemen and women. It is therefore natural for Americans to continue to strive to improve the institutions that govern them, just as they have advanced innovation and freedom around the globe for the last two centuries.

Fundamentally changing the national fabric, traditions, and values that made America the great country it is today runs counter to the goals of improving our nation. Fundamentally changing the founding documents that enabled America to grow as successfully as it has, or discarding them as antiquated guidelines, could very easily reverse the political direction of America and result in the country regressing into the type of tyrannical state we have often battled against. However, to ignore the contemporary challenges we face as a nation would be foolish and reckless. The fundamental changes that we need to institute are not to traditional American institutions but to the ever-expanding

federal government, which has far exceeded its size and authority as envisioned by the framers of our Constitution.

# CHAPTER 1: DEBT & TAXES

## **Our Growing National Debt**

*“But with respect to future debt; would it not be wise and just for that nation to declare in the constitution they are forming that neither the legislature, nor the nation itself can validly contract more debt, than they may pay within their own age, or within the term of 19 years.” –Thomas Jefferson*

Our national debt has surpassed \$17 trillion dollars and continues to mount. In 2012, the federal tax revenue collected by the US government was just over \$2.5 trillion dollars. When speaking of numbers in the trillions, the mere enormity of such quantities is almost inconceivable. To put a little perspective on how great this debt is, even for a country with an economy as considerable as that of the United States, consider an ordinary family with comparable debt. If the federal government was an individual family with a household annual income of \$70,000, that family would owe about \$476,000 in credit card debt. This is not to be confused with a home mortgage or a student loan. This is for goods and services already consumed. Any sensible family would understand that adjustments to lifestyle would need to be made in order to cut down on living expenses. However, this is not the mindset of those in the executive branch and the US Congress who create the federal budget.

Half of those federal officials elected to be good stewards of the people's money believe that the US economy benefits when the federal government spends more money. When President Obama assumed the duties of president of the United States in January 2009, he did face significant economic challenges. The country had slashed 598,000 jobs off of US payrolls that month, raising the unemployment rate to 7.6 percent.<sup>2</sup> In response, Congress passed the President's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, commonly referred to as the stimulus package. The \$787 billion economic stimulus package was approved by Congress in February of 2009 and was advertised to quickly jumpstart economic growth as well as save between 900,000 and 2.3 million jobs. The stimulus included \$288 billion in tax cuts, \$224 billion in extended unemployment benefits, education, and health care, and \$275 billion for job creation using federal contracts, grants, and loans.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the president's supporters credit the stimulus with preventing another Great Depression. They claim the US economy was in "free fall" prior to the passing of the bill and attribute the stimulus with ceasing the shedding of hundreds of thousands of jobs per month. This argument is pure hysteria. Some jobs and businesses were vulnerable, while most were firmly on solid ground. Those who were vulnerable were hurt.

Even by the president's own estimation, the stimulus did not perform to expectation. The administration proclaimed that the stimulus would prevent the unemployment rate from rising above 8 percent, but the unemployment rate quickly rose to 10 percent by October 2009, according to the US Department of Labor statistics. Additionally, the United States experienced a negative 3.5 percent drop in its annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate in 2009.<sup>4</sup>

Just as two honest sportscasters can make opposite predictions on who will win the Super Bowl, two accredited economists can adopt opposing positions on whether the stimulus helped, hurt, or had no effect on the economy. When taking into account that we live in a country of over 300 million people with a GDP of over \$15 trillion that is firmly intertwined within the global economy, often operating at the mercy of unpredictable events in an evolving, dynamic, and ever more perilous world, too many factors exist to forecast or explain the effects of a single action with absolute precision.

It is natural for personal bias to creep into conclusions even when we are attempting to be as objective as possible. When conducting research, an honest student may subconsciously and selectively place greater weight on data that supports a conclusion favorable to the student's premise. Supporters of the stimulus argue that they underestimated the 'hole' the previous administration had dug for the country or simply state that the stimulus package was not large enough by their calculations. However, evidence simply does not exist to support this deduction.

Never before had the US government spent so much money in an attempt to reinvigorate a sluggish economy. The hypothesis that heavy federal spending mends a struggling economy can now be debunked as a frivolous pipedream. The facts are that unemployment continued to skyrocket and remain elevated throughout President Obama's entire first term while the GDP remained stagnant. The advertised outcome of the stimulus was not achieved, not by far. The government spending experiment failed to stimulate the economy and simply added an additional \$787 billion to an already enormous federal debt.

## Not an Immediate Crisis

“No pecuniary consideration is more urgent, than the regular redemption and discharge of the public debt: on none can delay be more injurious, or an economy of time more valuable.”—George Washington

We now have a national debt which exceeds our nation’s GDP. This is not a mere nuisance, as many political pundits would have you believe. A national debt of this magnitude will not only take decades to pay down, it has very real and tangible outcomes that impact every American today. It strangles the economy by forcing the government to raise taxes on personal incomes as well as businesses. To offset increased taxes, businesses are forced to pass those costs on to consumers. This further raises the cost of living for Americans. Additionally, as businesses have less operating capital on hand, they will be forced to lay off workers. This leads to higher unemployment. As the federal government prints more money in an attempt to pay off its debt with cheaper dollars, the value of the US dollar decreases, which leads to inflation. The federal government also has less money to pay for essential programs as more money must be spent to pay the interest on the debt.

None of these problems get better with time. Procrastinating and continuing with deficit spending aggravates the already delicate situation, making the problems exponentially worse the longer we continue with business as usual.

What may be more alarming than the enormity of the actual national debt itself is that the elected officials in charge of our nation’s expenses do not see the crushing debt as an immediate crisis. In a March 13, 2013 interview with George Stephanopoulos on *Good Morning America*, President Obama stated, “We don’t have an immediate crisis in

terms of debt. In fact, for the next ten years, it's gonna be in a sustainable place."

The president's opposition leader seemingly shared the president's sentiments, echoing that same week the case that the current debt is not anything the people should be overly concerned with at the moment. On ABC's *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*, Speaker of the House Boehner stated, "We do not have an immediate debt crisis, but we all know that we have one looming. And we have one looming because we have entitlement programs that are not sustainable in their current form. They're gonna go bankrupt." Even the budget proposal presented by the Republican Party's fiscal hawk, Paul Ryan, in 2013, did not cut federal spending; it merely proposed to cut the anticipated *growth rate* of federal spending.

How can the American people feel confident their government will protect their future when those in government refuse to acknowledge the nation's most ominous threat as even being a crisis? As it stands, it would take decades to pay off the current federal debt if we began balancing the federal budget today. Unfortunately, neither side of the political isle is seriously considering balancing the budget, let alone paying down the national debt. "Kicking the can down the road" is a phrase neither party likes to be accused of, but that is exactly what both sides are doing.