

September 6, 2010

In the Jerusalem Post, [Daniel Gordis](#) has a stellar article on what lies behind the Ground Zero mosque controversy.

...For Israelis do have something to teach Americans... It goes something like this: It's fine to say that "America is not at war with Islam," to point out that most Muslims are not terrorists and that many American Muslims are moderates. That's true, as far as it goes.

But it only goes so far. Because America is at war and its enemies are Muslims. Politically correct hairsplitting runs the risk of Americans blinding themselves to that simple but critical fact. It makes no difference what percentage of the world's Muslims wants to destroy America. There are enough of them that US air travel is now abominably unpleasant and, more importantly, enough of them that more strikes on America appear inevitable. ...

...When my parents were teenagers, they watched as evil took hold of Europe. But then they saw America turn itself into an unprecedented, enormous military machine. For America's leaders understood that if the Nazis won, the world as we knew it would be over...

But when my children were teenagers, a different evil took root across their eastern horizon. This time, though, the world has feigned impotence. Iran is at the nuclear threshold. Iraq was at best a "non-failure." The battle against the Taliban and al-Qaida may take years, or decades, and may require many lives sacrificed if we are to win. But America has grown war-weary. Obama is already planning to bring the troops home; the word "terrorist" is increasingly off-limits in the US because it is considered "politically loaded."...

...Its tendency to gentility is part of what has made America great. But an unwillingness to call an "enemy" an enemy could lead to America's demise. For Islam's radical leaders tell us clearly what they seek: a world united under Islam, with America's sacred freedoms eradicated as a new "morality" replaces them. What is much less clear is whether Americans are willing to fight – to die and to kill – to protect those freedoms. ...

In Der Spiegel, [Thomas Straubhaar](#) writes about traditional American values, and whether we will return to the principles that made America great.

...A firm belief in the individual's ability, ideas, courage, will and a reliance on one's own resources brought the US to the top. The American dream promised everyone the chance of upward mobility -- literally from rags to riches, from minimum wage to millionaire. The individual's pursuit of happiness was seen as the crucial foundation for the well-being of society, rather than the benevolent state which cares for its subjects -- and certainly not the welfare state, which provides a social safety net for its citizens. ...

...Both the behavior of the American government and the Federal Reserve makes one thing clear: They do not see the solution to the US's economic woes in a return to traditional American virtues. Obama is not calling for the unleashing of market forces, as Ronald Reagan once did during an equally critical period in the early 1980s. On the contrary: Obama, driven by his own convictions and advised by economists who believe in government intervention, has taken a path that leads far away from those things that catapulted America to the top of the world in the past century.

The Obama administration's current policies rely on more government rather than personal responsibility and self-determination. They are administering to the patient more, not less, of exactly those things that led to the crisis. ...

...This raises a crucial question: Is the US economy perhaps suffering less from an economic downturn and more from a serious structural problem? It seems plausible that the American economy has lost its belief in American principles. People no longer have confidence in the self-healing forces of the private sector, and the reliance on self-help and self-regulation to solve problems no longer exists.

...The settlers of the New World rejected everything, which included throwing out anything with a semblance of state authority. They fled Europe to find freedom. The sole shared goal of the settlers was to obtain individual freedom and live independently, which included the freedom to say what they wanted, believe what they wanted and write what they wanted. The state was seen as a way to facilitate this goal. The state should not interfere in people's lives, aside from securing freedom, peace and security. Economic prosperity was seen as the responsibility of the individual. ...

Charles Krauthammer thinks the president needs to focus on the war effort as well as his domestic initiatives.

...Yet the observation is obvious: It is surely harder to prevail in a war that hinges on the allegiance of the locals when they hear the U.S. president talk of beginning a withdrawal that will ultimately leave them to the mercies of the Taliban.

How did Obama come to this decision? "Our Afghan policy was focused as much as anything on domestic politics," an Obama adviser [told the New York Times' Peter Baker](#). "He would not risk losing the moderate to centrist Democrats in the middle of health insurance reform and he viewed that legislation as the make-or-break legislation for his administration."

If this is true, then Obama's military leadership can only be called scandalous. During the past week, [22 Americans were killed](#) over a four-day period in Afghanistan. This is not a place about which decisions should be made in order to placate members of Congress, pass health care and thereby maintain a president's political standing. This is a place about which a president should make decisions to best succeed in the military mission he himself has set out. ...

In [Forbes](#), **John Tamny** sets forth an excellent explanation of the additional costs taxpayers are forced to incur when federal workers receive higher salaries.

...If it's true that government workers are more educated and in possession of greater skills, then it's also true that a still-difficult economic situation has been made more difficult by virtue of some of our best and brightest offering their skills to the inefficient government sector over the private economy. Their gain is the recessed economy's loss.

It should also be remembered the perverse incentives that exist among federal workers. Not able to advance based on profits, and doing more with less, workers in the government succeed the more the bureaucracy they work for grows, the more lawsuits they win against private actors, the more regulations they impose, and the more fines/fees they lift from the increasingly empty hands of the average American taxpayer.

Not only are we fleeced to cover the rising pay and gold-plated benefits of federal workers, we're essentially paying them to make our lives more difficult. The more they're able to do so, the more they advance. ...

Michael Graham, in the Boston Herald, gives us a glimpse of how government is taking care of itself during the economic turmoil.

Hey President Obama, I found your "recovery!" It was hidden among the theater seats and swimming pools at Newton North High.

...Struggling taxpayers looking for prosperity just have to drive through Newton and check out the new 400,000 square-foot high school with its two theaters, two gymnasiums, its fully-functional television studio and an SOA or "simulated outdoor area." Happy days are obviously here again when students are provided Kindle book readers and teachers use "interactive white boards" in wireless-tech classrooms. ...

...Who cares if it cost more than \$100,000 per pupil? We're with the government and we're livin' large!

...And that's the key. When you're looking for recovery in an Obama economy, all the good news is in the government sector. In fact, if you just work near the government, Obamanomics is for you.

...The fact is, there is a recovery under way and no, we taxpaying private-sector workers were not left out. We get to pay for it.

Noel Sheppard points out Chris Matthews' frustration with the teleprompted president, in Newsbusters.

...Near the end of a "Hardball" segment about the President's prime time address to the nation Tuesday, the host said, "If he doesn't get rid of that damn teleprompter...He's just reading words now."

Matthews continued, "It's separating him from us."

And continued, "You go to a meeting with him I'm told, businessmen are invited to meet him at the White House, he hauls out the damn teleprompter, and he reads it to them."

"The teleprompter is a problem for this guy. I think it's his menace"...

Jerusalem Post

[The Ground Zero mosque - what US could learn from Israel](#)

Life in our region has taught us that the first necessary step to defending yourself is acknowledging that someone is out to destroy you.

by Daniel Gordis

In its basic form, the Ground Zero mosque debate boils down to a conflict between two competing values – American freedom of religion versus the sensitivities of the families of the victims of 9/11.

The freedom-of-religion argument suggests that if Jews sought to build a synagogue at Ground Zero (or anywhere else, for that matter), they would be within their rights. That's the American way. The opposing view suggests that while not every Catholic was guilty in the Holocaust, and not every Muslim perpetrated the crimes of 9/11, sensitivities still matter. Pope John Paul II had the decency to force the Carmelite nuns out of Auschwitz, and Muslim leaders, too, ought to relocate their project.

Similarly, the mutual accusations are parallel: If you are opposed to the mosque, you are an Islamophobic racist. And if you're in favor of it, you're simply insensitive to the pain of those who lost loved ones in the attack.

But we Israelis have learned from our experience that matters are more complicated. One need not be racist or Islamophobic to be concerned about the mosque. For life in our region has taught us that the first necessary step to defending yourself is acknowledging that someone else is out to destroy you.

In the suburban, well-educated, politically and Jewishly liberal America in which I grew up, we didn't use the label "enemy." "Enemy" was a dirty word, because it implied the immutability of conflict. Yes, there were people who fought us, but only because we hadn't yet arrived at a fair resolution of our conflict. We needed to understand them, so we could then resolve the conflicts that divided us.

I still recall being jarred, when we made aliya, by the matter-of-factness with which Israelis use the word "enemy." But it wasn't a judgment or an accusation. It was simply a fact: There are people out to destroy our state, who seek to kill us and our children. And as the intifada later amply demonstrated, they did not yearn for our understanding or our friendship. They wanted our demise.

YEARS AGO, we took our then teenage daughter to an evening sponsored by the army, at which religious parents could ask questions about what the army would be like for their daughters. Some of the parents were downright hostile, clearly opposed to the prospect of their daughters joining the IDF. At one point, an obviously angry father stood up, turned to the base commander and asked (or more accurately hissed), "Do you make the girls work on Shabbat?"

The room was perfectly silent, for everyone knew the answer. No one moved. Even the base rabbi said nothing. He stood at the podium, leaned into the mike and, lost in thought, played with his beard.

Suddenly, one of the three soldiers who'd been brought to address the parents, a young woman with her uniform shirt buttoned up to her chin, her sleeves extending to her wrists and her armyissued skirt down to her ankles, looked the father right in the eye, and without being called on, said to him, "Of course we work on Shabbat." And then, after a second's pause, she added, "*Gam ha'oyev oved beshabbat*" – the enemy also works on Shabbat.

It was a game changer. "What?" she essentially asked. "You think we do this for fun? There are

people out there trying to destroy us. Either we're as serious about this conflict as they are, or they're going to win."

I hadn't thought of that young woman in years, but ever since the Cordoba Initiative controversy erupted, I've remembered her repeatedly. For Israelis do have something to teach Americans, and it's very similar to what she said to that father. It goes something like this: It's fine to say that "America is not at war with Islam," to point out that most Muslims are not terrorists and that many American Muslims are moderates. That's true, as far as it goes.

But it only goes so far. Because America is at war and its enemies are Muslims. Politically correct hairsplitting runs the risk of Americans blinding themselves to that simple but critical fact. It makes no difference what percentage of the world's Muslims wants to destroy America. There are enough of them that US air travel is now abominably unpleasant and, more importantly, enough of them that more strikes on America appear inevitable.

The US got lucky on Christmas Day when the bomber headed to Detroit failed to detonate his explosives, and was lucky again in Times Square in May, but less fortunate at Fort Hood. Yet those may be but the beginning. We could, heaven forbid, come to see 9/11 as child's play.

THE UNITED States' future is under attack, but Americans resist admitting it. President Barack Obama has sent 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan, but he has also said that he intends to pull them out by July. Can we imagine FDR declaring war on Germany, but then adding that the war had to be over in a year, or in two? It would have been laughable. And America would have lost. The US has to decide – is it committed to destroying those who wish it ill, or is it willing to be destroyed by them? Those, sadly, are its only two alternatives.

When my parents were teenagers, they watched as evil took hold of Europe. But then they saw America turn itself into an unprecedented, enormous military machine. For America's leaders understood that if the Nazis won, the world as we knew it would be over; we could either destroy Nazism, or have no reason to go on.

But when my children were teenagers, a different evil took root across their eastern horizon. This time, though, the world has feigned impotence. Iran is at the nuclear threshold. Iraq was at best a "non-failure." The battle against the Taliban and al-Qaida may take years, or decades, and may require many lives sacrificed if we are to win. But America has grown war-weary. Obama is already planning to bring the troops home; the word "terrorist" is increasingly off-limits in the US because it is considered "politically loaded."

Americans simply want the conflict to be over.

Its tendency to gentility is part of what has made America great. But an unwillingness to call an "enemy" an enemy could lead to America's demise. For Islam's radical leaders tell us clearly what they seek: a world united under Islam, with America's sacred freedoms eradicated as a new "morality" replaces them. What is much less clear is whether Americans are willing to fight – to die and to kill – to protect those freedoms.

Whether or not the Ground Zero mosque ultimately gets built may not matter nearly as much as whether or not Americans are willing to gird themselves for the battles that sadly lie ahead. We Israelis understand the fatigue that comes with war. We, like Americans, would much prefer a world in which we did not have mortal enemies. We, like Americans, would much prefer that our children went to college at 18, and not to years of military service. But we've learned that anything short of absolute clear-sightedness and honesty – coupled with extraordinary sacrifice – could destroy us.

The same is true for America. The truly important question that the “Islamophobia” accusation raises is not what will transpire with a proposed building, but what will happen with a worldview. It still remains to be seen if America will do what it must if it is to guarantee the survival of the very values it is now debating. America can remain the “land of the free,” but only if it is also the “home of the brave.”

The writer is senior vice president of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem. He is the author of Saving Israel: How the Jewish People Can Win a War that May Never End, which recently received a 2009 National Jewish Book Award. He blogs at <http://danielgordis.org>.

Der Spiegel

Obama's Misguided Approach

America Has Become Too European

by Thomas Straubhaar

The Obama administration and the Federal Reserve want to fix the United States economy by spending more money. But while that approach might work for Europe, it is risky for the US. The nation would be better off embracing traditional American values like self-reliance and small government.

There's no question about it: The 20th century was America's era. The United States rose rapidly from virtually nothing to become the most politically powerful and economically strongest country in the world. But the financial crisis and subsequent recession have now raised doubts about its future. Are we currently witnessing the beginning of the end of the American era?

A firm belief in the individual's ability, ideas, courage, will and a reliance on one's own resources brought the US to the top. The American dream promised everyone the chance of upward mobility -- literally from rags to riches, from minimum wage to millionaire. The individual's pursuit of happiness was seen as the crucial foundation for the well-being of society, rather than the benevolent state which cares for its subjects -- and certainly not the welfare state, which provides a social safety net for its citizens.

In the American system, every man was responsible for himself -- in good times and bad. No one could count on government assistance, not even the wannabe millionaire who did not make it and ended up homeless.

For many US citizens, the financial crisis has turned the American dream into a nightmare. Millions of Americans are struggling with high levels of debt, and not only because they bought overpriced houses during the housing boom and can no longer afford their mortgages. Often families are burdened with loans they took out during better times for cars, furniture, electronic gadgets or university tuition. Uncertainty and worries about the future are [keeping many families awake at night](#).

From 'Hire and Fire' to Just 'Fire'

The economic data reveals just how deep the misery is. After a good beginning to the year, the economic recovery in the US has slowed significantly. There are hardly any new jobs, and the official US unemployment rate remains high at 9.5 percent. The actual unemployment rate could be almost

twice as high, partially because of the many Americans who are working part time against their will and also because of the millions of people locked up in the country's prisons.

Particularly troubling is the phenomenon of long-term unemployment, something which is unusual in the US. The number of people who have been without work for more than six months has skyrocketed as a result of the recession, from just over 1 million to 6.8 million. The traditional policy of "hire and fire" has become a one-way street: Now it is all firing and no hiring.

The state is also suffering as a result. Heavily indebted state, county and city governments have less money to spend. Even before the crisis, roads full of potholes were part of everyday life in some places, as were power outages and other problems with the public energy and water supply. What's new, however, is that some cities in America are deliberately choosing to cut core services, such as switching off street lighting. Last winter, Colorado Springs, which with its 400,000 inhabitants is the second largest city in the state of Colorado, turned off one-third of its street lights to save money.

Nothing is immune from the wave of budget cuts, it seems. Schools have been closed and teachers laid off. Roads have been allowed to fall into disrepair and parks left to rot.

Fear of the Double Dip

It appears that the US economy, after the worst crisis of the postwar period, is slow to recover its old dynamism, unlike in previous recessions. Some economists are warning of a double-dip recession, and putting forward radical proposals to prevent this worst-case scenario from becoming reality.

In his widely read Friday column in the *New York Times*, the Nobel laureate economist and Obama adviser Paul Krugman last week called for the administration to bet the farm on a new attempt to stimulate the economy. Krugman recommended that the Federal Reserve buy up government securities and corporate bonds on a massive scale, announce its intention to keep short-term interest rates low in a bid to push down long-term rates, and raise its medium-term target for inflation. The Obama administration should also use its two government-sponsored real estate lenders, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, to help heavily indebted homeowners refinance their mortgages, Krugman wrote.

On Friday, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke made a speech that sounded like it had been based on Krugman's column. He announced exactly what the *New York Times* columnist had called for, saying that the Fed was ready to intervene and would reanimate the sluggish US economy with further cash infusions if necessary. Then on Monday, Obama said he and his economic team were "hard at work in identifying additional measures" to stimulate the US economy.

A Return to Traditional American Virtues

Both the behavior of the American government and the Federal Reserve makes one thing clear: They do not see the solution to the US's economic woes in a return to traditional American virtues. Obama is not calling for the unleashing of market forces, as Ronald Reagan once did during an equally critical period in the early 1980s. On the contrary: Obama, driven by his own convictions and advised by economists who believe in government intervention, has taken a path that leads far away from those things that catapulted America to the top of the world in the past century.

The Obama administration's current policies rely on more government rather than personal responsibility and self-determination. They are administering to the patient more, not less, of exactly those things that led to the crisis.

The crash was partially caused by a policy of cheap money. If interest rates stay as low as they are, the state will get into more and more debt. One day these debts will have to be repaid, together with interest and compound interest. This will result in tax increases, which will reduce wages, the result of individuals' hard work. In addition, low interest rates will make saving unattractive for private individuals, thereby making it harder for America to break with its addiction to credit.

Helping America's Enemies

It's not just wealthy Republicans who are now accusing Barack Obama of betraying American ideals, although the conservative zealots of the Tea Party movement go too far in their criticism. They regard the Obama's administration approach to fighting the crisis as a treacherous attack by dark powers on the freedom of the United States. For them, Barack Obama is working on behalf of America's enemies.

But the move away from policies based on the American Way, which made the US by far the world's stronger economy, is also making well-meaning observers increasingly nervous. They are asking questions like: Why should the government care about the economic status or health of individuals? Why should one person pay for the misfortunes or illnesses of others?

The highest commandment of the American worldview was always to maximize individual freedoms and minimize government influence. It was an approach that was highly successful. According to that rule, self-directed action would remain the rule and government intervention the unpopular exception. But that is no longer the case.

Loss of Faith

This raises a crucial question: Is the US economy perhaps suffering less from an economic downturn and more from a serious structural problem? It seems plausible that the American economy has lost its belief in American principles. People no longer have confidence in the self-healing forces of the private sector, and the reliance on self-help and self-regulation to solve problems no longer exists.

The opposite strategy, one that seeks to treat the American patient with more government, is risky -- because it does not fit in with America's image of itself.

In Europe, the state is the result of centuries of struggle by relatively homogeneous societies and it has always played a major role in European societies. Therefore, a broad majority of the population supports economic policies based on government intervention, especially in difficult times. And Germany's current successes in dealing with the crisis suggest that the Europeans are probably right in their approach. The German economy will probably [grow more this year](#) than the American one. In Europe, government-prescribed medicine goes down well.

But what is good for Europe and Germany does not automatically work for the US. The settlers of the New World rejected everything, which included throwing out anything with a semblance of state authority. They fled Europe to find freedom. The sole shared goal of the settlers was to obtain individual freedom and live independently, which included the freedom to say what they wanted, believe what they wanted and write what they wanted. The state was seen as a way to facilitate this goal. The state should not interfere in people's lives, aside from securing freedom, peace and security. Economic prosperity was seen as the responsibility of the individual.

End of the American Way?

If you take this belief away from Americans, you are destroying the binds which interlink America's heterogeneous society. Removing this belief could lead to conflicts between different sections of society, clashes which have long bubbled beneath the surface.

What could help would be a return to the American Way, the approach which made the US so historically powerful. The success of this model is illustrated by history. In 1820, twice as many people lived in the United Kingdom as the US, and its economic performance (measured by gross domestic product) was three times as strong and the average standard of living (measured by GDP per person) was a quarter higher. Today, there are about five times more people living in the US than the UK, America's economic performance is about seven times better than Britain's and the average American is about 50 percent better off than the average Briton.

What should be done? It would be more intelligent to repair the elevator which helped the US rise from the bottom of the heap to the top, instead of trying to transplant a European style of operating onto American soil. Either the US follows the American Way -- an approach characterized by a shared history, economic success and constant progress -- or the US will have to adjust itself to the "European" way, sparking economic and social tensions in the process.

If the US manages to revert to its former ways, there is potential for hope. If not, the American age will have really come to an end.

Washington Post

[Our distracted commander in chief](#)

by Charles Krauthammer

Many have charged that President Obama's decision to begin withdrawing from Afghanistan 10 months from now is hampering our war effort. But now it's official. In a stunning [statement last week](#), Marine Corps Commandant James Conway admitted that the July 2011 date is "probably giving our enemy sustenance."

A remarkably bold charge for an active military officer. It stops just short of suggesting aiding and abetting the enemy. Yet the observation is obvious: It is surely harder to prevail in a war that hinges on the allegiance of the locals when they hear the U.S. president talk of beginning a withdrawal that will ultimately leave them to the mercies of the Taliban.

How did Obama come to this decision? "Our Afghan policy was focused as much as anything on domestic politics," an Obama adviser [told the New York Times' Peter Baker](#). "He would not risk losing the moderate to centrist Democrats in the middle of health insurance reform and he viewed that legislation as the make-or-break legislation for his administration."

If this is true, then Obama's military leadership can only be called scandalous. During the past week, [22 Americans were killed](#) over a four-day period in Afghanistan. This is not a place about which decisions should be made in order to placate members of Congress, pass health care and thereby maintain a president's political standing. This is a place about which a president should make decisions to best succeed in the military mission he himself has set out.

But Obama sees his wartime duties as a threat to his domestic agenda. These wars are a distraction, unwanted interference with his true vocation -- [transforming America](#).

Such an impression could only have been reinforced when, given the opportunity in his [Oval Office address this week](#) to dispel the widespread perception in Afghanistan that America is leaving, Obama doubled down on his ambivalence. After giving a nod to the *pace* of troop reductions being conditions-based, he declared with his characteristic "but make no mistake" that "this transition will begin -- because open-ended war serves neither our interests nor the Afghan people's."

These are the words of a man who wants out. Most emphatically from Iraq, where Obama has long made clear that his objective is simply ending combat operations by an arbitrary deadline -- despite the fact that a new government has not been formed and all our hard-won success hangs in the balance -- in order to address the more paramount concern: keeping a campaign promise. Time to "turn the page" and turn America elsewhere.

At first you'd think that turning is to Afghanistan. But Obama added nothing to his previously stated Afghan policy while emphatically reiterating July 2011 as the beginning of the end, or more diplomatically, of the "transition."

Well then, at least you'd expect some vision of his larger foreign policy. After all, this was his first Oval Office address on the subject. What is the meaning, if any, of the Iraq and Afghan wars? And what of the clouds that are forming beyond those theaters: the drone-war escalation in Pakistan, [the rise of al-Qaeda in Yemen](#), the danger of Somalia [falling to al-Shabab](#), and the threat of renewed civil war in Islamist Sudan as a referendum on independence for southern Christians and animists approaches?

This was the stage for Obama to explain what follows the [now-abolished Global War on Terror](#). Where does America stand on the spreading threats to stability, decency and U.S. interests from the Horn of Africa to the Hindu Kush?

On this, not a word. Instead, Obama made a strange and clumsy segue into a pep talk on the economy. Rebuilding it, he declared, "must be our central mission as a people, and my central responsibility as president." This in a speech ostensibly about the two wars he is directing. He could not have made more clear where his priorities lie, and how much he sees foreign policy -- war policy - - as subordinate to his domestic ambitions.

Unfortunately, what for Obama is a distraction is life or death for U.S. troops now on patrol in Kandahar province. Some presidents may not like being wartime leaders. But they don't get to decide. History does. Obama needs to accept the role. It's not just the U.S. military, as Baker reports, that is "worried he is not fully invested in the cause." Our allies, too, are experiencing doubt. And our enemies are drawing sustenance.

Forbes

[Government Pay: Now For The Really Bad News](#)

High federal pay means less capital formation, lower wages and reduced innovation.

John Tamny, 08.30.10, 6:00 AM ET

By now, most Americans are familiar with the newly revealed statistics concerning federal pay. As we slept, as it were, our federal minders awarded themselves impressive pay/benefits increases that average out to \$123,000 per year, compared with \$61,000 in the private sector.

This is remarkable on its face considering that those of us in the private sector produce goods and services to earn our wages, while a federal government that lacks resources must expropriate our wealth in order to fund its own activities. To put it simply, federal employees have enjoyed larger average pay and benefits increases for nine straight years, and their benefactor has been *us*.

To say things are presently upside down is to describe the present situation very mildly. Most of us in the private sector have naively believed for a long time that in return for job security and the ability to work free of the profit-and-loss worries, that government workers have accepted reduced compensation. It's apparent now that all the benefits of "public service" apply, plus the pay trumps by far what one could hope to command in the private economy, recession or no recession.

Sadly, however, that's not even the bad news.

Indeed, as the defenders of federal pay would no doubt tell us, the comparison between federal and private workers isn't an apples to apples comparison. To hear them say it, federal workers have on average higher skill sets and are often advanced when it comes to education.

This should in no way appease us. If it's true that government workers are more educated and in possession of greater skills, then it's also true that a still-difficult economic situation has been made more difficult by virtue of some of our best and brightest offering their skills to the inefficient government sector over the private economy. Their gain is the recessed economy's loss.

It should also be remembered the perverse incentives that exist among federal workers. Not able to advance based on profits, and doing more with less, workers in the government succeed the more the bureaucracy they work for grows, the more lawsuits they win against private actors, the more regulations they impose, and the more fines/fees they lift from the increasingly empty hands of the average American taxpayer.

Not only are we fleeced to cover the rising pay and gold-plated benefits of federal workers, we're essentially paying them to make our lives more difficult. The more they're able to do so, the more they advance.

Considering private businesses, whatever their size they all started out small. And irrespective of their size, businesses need "human capital" in order to grow.

The problem now is that with the federal government aggressively hiring at excessive levels of pay, it is necessarily distorting the cost of hiring for private businesses. The "unseen" is what we must consider in this scenario, and there we can only guess how many world-renowned companies of tomorrow will never see the light of day thanks to Washington increasingly snapping up potentially productive workers.

Looking at small businesses alone, it's well-known that owners often have their profits taxed at individual levels. With those levels set to go up in 2011, entrepreneurs will have their profits confiscated by the very federal government that is driving up the cost of hiring with *their* money.

Writing about the U.S. from the post-Civil War years up to the end of the 19th century, economist Joseph Schumpeter observed that the genius of the U.S. economy had to do with how the greatest American minds went into private business, and avoided government service altogether. As he pointed out, from 1865 to 1901, lackluster presidents such as Rutherford B. Hayes and Chester A. Arthur occupied the White House, while entrepreneurial geniuses such as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller dotted the commercial landscape.

The problem, according to Schumpeter, was that by the 1940s, after a decade of tremendous federal government growth, private commerce had started to lose some of its human firepower to the public sector. As evidenced by present levels of federal pay, something similar could be occurring right now.

And the burden will be very much ours. Contrary to the conventional wisdom suggesting that it's our grandchildren that will pay the bill for an out-of-control government, the more realistic truth is that we're paying the government tab right now through high, and soon to be higher taxes, along with reduced innovation and productivity in the for-profit sector thanks to Washington bidding limited human and financial capital away from the productive parts of the economy. We must always consider the "unseen," and in this case it's the wealth we won't create and the companies that will not materialize thanks to the greedy hand of the federal government.

So while it's surely bad news to find out that how well compensated our federal employees have come to be *on our dime*, the greater shame here is what this means for the U.S. economy as a whole. Washington is in hiring mode with our dollars, and we're set to pay for its spendthrift ways through less capital formation, lower wages and reduced innovation.

Boston Herald

'Recovery' unaffordable

Public sector livin' high on the hog

by Michael Graham

Hey President Obama, I found your "recovery!" It was hidden among the theater seats and swimming pools at Newton North High.

With yesterday's news that the private sector "unexpectedly"(!) lost another 10,000 jobs last month, and the U.S. auto industry having its worst August in 28 years, the White House buzz about "recovery summer" may seem odd to some.

Heck, I know people who just shake their heads and change their voter registration when they hear Vice President Joe Biden insist that there's "no doubt we're moving in the right direction" economically. And with Herald headlines like "Joblessness blamed for 80 percent spike in Mass. foreclosures," you can't blame folks for losing faith.

But the recovery is there. You just have to know where to look for it.

Sure, if you're a blue-collar worker competing with illegal-immigrant labor, times are pretty tough. But if you're in the \$200 million high school business, you're booming!

Struggling taxpayers looking for prosperity just have to drive through Newton and check out the new 400,000 square-foot high school with its two theaters, two gymnasiums, its fully-functional television studio and an SOA or "simulated outdoor area." Happy days are obviously here again when students are provided Kindle book readers and teachers use "interactive white boards" in wireless-tech classrooms.

Some people would feel a bit uncomfortable with such an ostentatious display of taxpayer-funded wealth during this economic downturn, but not in Newton. They are more than happy to show off their computer labs and "Starbucks-style cafe." So what if the final construction cost was around \$480 per

square foot - three times the average for commercial construction in New York City? Who cares if it cost more than \$100,000 per pupil? We're with the government and we're livin' large!

And not just in Newton. Life is good in all five of Sen. [John Kerry](#)'s houses, plus wherever he's parking his yacht for tax purposes these days. The Hill magazine reports that not only is our senior senator the richest member of Congress for the second year in a row, but his net worth went up by \$20 million in 2009.

In fact, "the 50 wealthiest members of Congress saw their collective fortunes rise to \$1.4 billion in 2009 - an \$85.1 million jump from 2008," says The Hill.

Not many people can say that. Well, not in the real world, anyway.

And that's the key. When you're looking for recovery in an Obama economy, all the good news is in the government sector. In fact, if you just work near the government, Obamanomics is for you.

A job-search Web site, [juju.com](#), used Bureau of Labor Statistics numbers to pick the 10 best cities to find a job today. Number one? Washington, D.C. And what's the number one industry in the district? If you guessed "adultery and low-rent corruption," you're close.

D.C. is ground zero of government, and when federal spending jumps by a one-year record of 6 percent - \$3.2 trillion total - prosperity is certain to follow.

It's probably no coincidence that six of the top 10 cities are capitals. From Utah to Connecticut, government is where the economic action is.

The fact is, there is a recovery under way and no, we taxpaying private-sector workers were not left out. We get to pay for it.

NewsBusters

[Chris Matthews Rips Obama's Teleprompter: 'I Think It's His Menace'](#)

by Noel Sheppard

Chris Matthews on Wednesday laid into Barack Obama's teleprompter calling it "his menace."

Near the end of a "Hardball" segment about the President's prime time address to the nation Tuesday, the host said, "If he doesn't get rid of that damn teleprompter...He's just reading words now."

Matthews continued, "It's separating him from us."

And continued, "You go to a meeting with him I'm told, businessmen are invited to meet him at the White House, he hauls out the damn teleprompter, and he reads it to them."

"The teleprompter is a problem for this guy. I think it's his menace" (video follows with partial transcript and commentary):



AMERICANS ONLY
OPPOSE OBAMA
BECAUSE THEY
ARE RACIST.



AMERICANS WERE
AGAINST THE STIMULUS
BECAUSE THEY'RE
UNEDUCATED.



AMERICANS OPPOSE
SOCIALISM BECAUSE
THEY'RE GREEDY.



AMERICANS ARE
AGAINST OBAMACARE
BECAUSE THEY'RE
STUPID.



AMERICANS ARE
OPPOSED TO THE
GROUND ZERO
MOQUE BECAUSE
THEY'RE BIGOTS.



I JUST DON'T KNOW
WHY AMERICANS
ARE OPPOSED TO US.





