

humming and the middle class from advancing, is a 4.6-point hike in marginal tax rates for the rich.

This, in a country \$15 trillion in debt with out-of-control entitlements systematically starving every other national need. This obsession with a sock-it-to-the-rich tax hike that, at most, would have reduced this year's deficit from \$1.30 trillion to \$1.22 trillion is the classic reflex of reactionary liberalism—anything to avoid addressing the underlying structural problems, which would require modernizing the totemic programs of the New Deal and Great Society.

As for those structural problems, Obama has spent three years on signature policies that either ignore or aggravate them:

—A massive stimulus, a gigantic payoff to Democratic interest groups (such as teachers, public-sector unions) that will add nearly \$1 trillion to the national debt.

—A sweeping federally run reorganization of health care that (a) cost Congress a year, (b) created an entirely new entitlement in a nation hemorrhaging from unsustainable entitlements, (c) introduced new levels of uncertainty into an already stagnant economy.

—High-handed regulation, best exemplified by Obama's failed cap-and-trade legislation, promptly followed by the Environmental Protection Agency trying to impose the same conventional-energy-killing agenda by administrative means.

Moreover, on the one issue that already enjoys a bipartisan consensus—the need for fundamental reform of a corrosive, corrupted tax code that misdirects capital and promotes unfairness—Obama did nothing, ignoring the recommendations of several bipartisan commissions, including his own.

In Kansas, Obama lamented that millions “are now forced to take their children to food banks.” You have to admire the audacity. That's the kind of damning observation the opposition brings up when you've been in office three years. Yet Obama summoned it to make the case for his reelection!

Why? Because, you see, he bears no responsibility for the current economic distress. It's the rich. And, like Horatius at the bridge, Obama stands with the American masses against the soulless plutocrats.

This is populism so crude that it channels not Teddy Roosevelt so much as Hugo Chavez. But with high unemployment, economic stagnation and unprecedented deficits, what else can Obama say?

He can't run on stewardship. He can't run on policy. His signature initiatives—the stimulus, Obamacare and the failed cap-and-trade—will go unmentioned in his campaign ads. Indeed, they will be the stuff of Republican ads.

What's left? Class resentment. Got a better idea?

Mr. KYL. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. KERRY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I apologize for interrupting my colleague, and I will not for long. I think my colleague wants to speak on the subject of the nominations that are going to be contained within an hour of debate, equally divided. I want to make certain the comments of the Senator are going to be part of that time period. So if I could ask, for my colleague—I believe we are almost at the hour where we

have to go to executive session and report the two nominations. I would be happy, then, to yield to my colleague to speak first, if he wishes.

Would my colleague agree with that?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I am willing to do that, but I thought I maintained the right to the floor by—

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that after we have moved to executive session, the Senator from Iowa be the first to speak in the time period allotted to the opponents.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF NORMAN L. EISEN TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

NOMINATION OF MARI CARMEN APONTE TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, en bloc, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nominations of Norman L. Eisen, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Czech Republic, and Mari Carmen Aponte, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of El Salvador.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 1 hour of debate equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to speak about one of the votes we are going to have this afternoon, and it has nothing to do with Mr. Eisen's job as Ambassador. It is about why he has not been confirmed to this point.

The President announced Mr. Eisen's nomination to be Ambassador to the Czech Republic on June 28, 2010. On September 20, 2010, I provided public notice of my intention to object to the nomination. In other words, as I always do when I put a hold on some-

thing—a bill or a nomination—I put a reason in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD so that everybody knows it is me. I am not a secret-holds guy.

The reason for my objection is not related to the substance of his duty as Ambassador; I object to his nomination because of the way Mr. Eisen handled the controversial firing of Gerald Walpin and the congressional inquiry into that firing. Mr. Walpin was the inspector general at the Corporation for National Community Service, AmeriCorps. Mr. Eisen was at the White House Counsel's office at the time.

Any attempt to undermine the independence and integrity of inspectors general raises serious concerns with me, and anybody ought to know that about this Senator. An inspector general who does his or her job runs the risk of losing friends at any agency as well as maybe the White House. The Congress must not sit idly by when an inspector general is removed improperly.

After the President abruptly removed Inspector General Walpin from office, there were allegations that he was fired for political reasons. So I started the investigation. There was evidence that the removal may have been motivated by a desire to protect a friend and political ally of the President, mayor of Sacramento Kevin Johnson.

The inspector general and CNCS management were clashing over an inquiry into misuse of Federal grant money at a charity run by Johnson. There were allegations that the grant money was used to pay for personal services for Johnson such as maybe washing his car. There seemed to be evidence of that. There were allegations that the grant money has been used to pay for political campaign work. So what would you expect an inspector general to do?

The IG was pushing aggressively to require Johnson to repay the Federal grant money that his charity could not account for. The inspector general was also pushing to have Johnson prohibited from receiving future Federal grant funds. This caused, as you might expect, a political uproar because some people feared that might prevent the city of Sacramento from receiving Federal stimulus dollars during the financial crisis.

All of this background cried out for further investigation. I also learned that Mr. Eisen personally delivered an ultimatum to Inspector General Walpin. He demanded the inspector general resign or be terminated within 1 hour. At the time he delivered the ultimatum, no notice had been given or provided to Congress as is legally required under the Inspector General Reform Act.

The IG Act requires the President to tell Congress the reasons for removal of an inspector general 30 days before taking action. That is what the law requires. Now, ironically, I cosponsored this provision with Senator Obama before he became President Obama. The