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Obama In Osawatomie

by John Hayward ([more by this author](#))

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President Obama spoke in Osawatomie, Kansas today, speaking in the vein of the “New Nationalism” speech Teddy Roosevelt gave there a century ago. There was a lot of the usual Obama stump content, including pleas for infrastructure spending, demands for the rich to “pay their fair share,” and the traditional shout-out to Warren Buffett’s secretary – a perennial class-warfare martyr who pays a higher tax rate (but a miniscule fraction of the tax dollars) coughed up by her boss. She belongs on Mount Rushmore at this point.

Buried beneath the tired Obama 2012 campaign claptrap – and I wonder if even some of the President’s dwindling base of fervent supporters aren’t growing weary of hearing the exact same focus-grouped phrases tediously repeated, over and over again – were two central ideas, tied back to the “New Nationalism” theme. First: it’s crucial for America to collectively recover its economic greatness by pitching in, paying fair shares, and working together under the direction of a benevolent government that will coach Team America to Win The Future. Second: everyone should play by the same set of rules.

These two ideas are *entirely* contradictory. The Obama presidency comes off as deranged because it’s impossible to reconcile them without going mad.

For example, if everyone is supposed to play by the same set of rules, why do we need 30+ “czars” to exercise heavily funded, largely unaccountable powers over Americans who have committed no crimes? If we’re all going to play by the same rules now, does that mean the President’s buddies are going to return their ObamaCare waivers?

Indeed, the central concept underlying liberal and socialist thought, the immense progressive tax system, is founded on the concept of treating people “unfairly.” Obama complained in his Osawatomie speech about sinister millionaires taking advantage of too many “loopholes” to avoid high taxes (hi, Warren Buffett’s secretary!) However, he didn’t have much to say about the huge constellation of manifestly “unfair” rules designed to penalize activities the government disapproves of, or subsidize objectives it finds worthy.

For that matter, Obama was noticeably silent about the need to eliminate an extremely “unfair” rule that kicks in when middle-class small business owners take too many of the deductions they are legally entitled to, many of them offered by the government to promote specific behaviors: the Alternative Minimum Tax. The AMT was originally written to snare a tiny handful (as in several dozen) super-rich people who were legally avoiding too many tax traps. Now it slams into vast numbers of small business owners, and penalizes them for scrupulously obeying fantastically complicated tax laws. AMT victims most certainly are not “playing by the same rules” as everyone else.

It’s rather brazen for President Solyndra to insist that “a strong middle class can only exist in an economy where everyone plays by the same rules, from Wall Street to Main Street.” Some very special rules were in effect for the top Obama contributors who received those huge, utterly wasted “green energy” subsidies. In fact, plenty of long-established rules were shredded to get that money into their pockets.

Even leaving Obama’s blatant corruption aside, the “green energy” disasters are perfect evidence of how badly flawed his world-view is, and how it’s impossible to reconcile his love for benevolent Big Government with the imperative to treat everyone equally. Americans don’t want to buy the products Obama wants them to. They don’t want to use the type of energy he would prefer them to settle for. They don’t want to invest in the companies Obama thinks will engineer a sustainable future. *They don’t want to ride on his damned high-speed rail lines.* Therefore, it is indispensably necessary to treat Americans unequally, in order to compel the

outcomes dictated by Obama's ideology.

There's no way to square that circle, and Obama doesn't really try. He just tarts up his endless Big Government failures with hollow rhetoric about fair play and responsible government. (It's hilarious to hear the biggest-spending president in history boast of signing "a trillion dollars of spending cuts into law," without mentioning that they're spread out over a decade, unlike all the debt he's already piled upon us.)

He butters up the audience with stuff like "the things that have always been our strengths match up perfectly with the needs of the moment," a gut-buster for anyone who recalls how frequently he's been complaining that stupid and lazy Americans, no longer capable of producing marvels like the Golden Gate Bridge, are to blame for his failures. He says restoring the middle class demands that "everyone get their fair chance at success," without having much to say about the employees he's put out of work through moratoriums, much less the victims of politicized assaults like the war on Gibson Guitars.

There is simply no way to respect fairness, legal equality, and level playing fields while re-distributing wealth and using force to sculpt a command economy. We can't impose crushing corporate tax rates on American business, then complain about layoffs and outsourcing. No sensible person has the slightest doubt which side Barack Obama comes down on.

John Hayward is a staff writer for HUMAN EVENTS, and author of the recently published [Doctor Zero: Year One](#). Follow him on Twitter: [Doc 0](#). Contact him by email at jhayward@eaglepub.com.

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