

Put Wars and Banksters on PAYGO

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On Tuesday President Obama proposed that any increases in federal spending on anything useful, such as healthcare or retirement security, must be balanced by cuts and savings to something else useful, such as healthcare or retirement security.

“The pay-as-you-go rule is very simple,” Obama said. “Congress can only spend a dollar if it saves a dollar elsewhere.” Except that it’s not so simple. Obama would make an exception to allow Bush’s tax cuts for millionaires to be extended past their 2010 expiration date, as well as to prevent the alternative-minimum tax from impacting the overclass. Still, the White House insists that everything is very simple:

“PAYGO would hold us to a simple but important principle: we should pay for new tax or entitlement legislation. Creating a new non-emergency tax cut or entitlement expansion would require offsetting revenue increases or spending reductions.”

But, guess what? War supplementals and bankster bailouts are “emergencies” and the Pentagon and regular budget war funding are not “entitlements.” (Someone will have to explain this to the CEOs over at Boeing, BAE, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics, and Raytheon, but it’s true). With roughly half of every dollar of income tax going to the military and wars and debt for military and wars, we again have a public discussion of “government spending” that ignores the military and wars. Contrary to popular myth, by the way, team Obama just increased — and therefore did not decrease — what had been the largest military budget in world history. And let’s not forget the Bush-Obama bankster bailouts that suddenly made military spending look small.

As it happens, however, there is a perfect vehicle available right now for an expansion of PAYGO: the war supplemental cum IMF bailout now being debated in the House. Here’s an extra \$97 billion for wars and military that was not included in the regular budget. This is an expansion of spending, and nobody has explained where the money can come from. Then there’s a \$5 billion gift accompanied by \$100 billion in loans to bailout European banksters through the IMF. Nobody has suggested where that money could possibly be found. And then there are the gimmicks being added in to bribe unscrupulous congress critters to vote for the thing: cash for clunkers programs and so forth. The drafters of the bill have not been reducing the money for airplanes the Pentagon doesn’t want or for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in order to cover the cost of buying clunkers. Everything is just piled on top.

Now, in reality, the idea that you have to pay for what you purchase is as close as one comes to a “law” of economics that will take effect eventually whether or not it’s made into what passes for a “law” in Washington, D.C. Every trillion dollars we throw at banksters and bombers is a trillion dollars we cannot use to provide free quality education from pre-school

through college, high-speed trains, green energy, or healthcare. But, as long as we're making things explicit, it might be worth phoning Democrats in the House and asking them what they are going to cut to pay for the war supplemental. What useful "entitlement" or, for that matter, military waste are they prepared to slash by \$97 billion plus all that money for the IMF to use in ruining other people's economies? If one word characterizes the responses you're likely to get (and please report on them) that word is: "elusive."

"Paying for what you spend is basic common sense," says President Obama. "Perhaps that's why, here in Washington, it's been so elusive."

But note that 15 House Democrats thus far have said they will vote No, and with all the Republicans voting No we only need a couple dozen more representatives of the party we keep electing to end the wars. We CAN win this one.

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