



EDITORIAL

Deficit disaster

Problem too important to ignore

As the American public stares blankly into the headlights of a runaway deficit, the presidential candidates appear hesitant to address the issue amidst the rhetoric of economics and family values.

Paramount among such economic issues as joblessness and competitiveness, deficits create a number of problems for the national economy. Deficit spending devours capital that would otherwise go into investment and job creation. Governments, often tempted to "monetize" the debt by devaluing the dollar, attempt to pay back the debt with "cheaper" dollars and subsequently increase inflation.

President Bush continues to lay blame for the deficit in the hands of Congress. However, the president's insistence on pointing fingers at Congress conveniently overlooks the fact that neither Bush nor his predecessor Ronald Reagan ever sent a balanced budget to Congress. Bush has become the biggest domestic spender in the White House since Kennedy.

The numbers are sobering. Approaching \$400 billion, the 1992 budget deficit yields a price tag of \$1,600 for every person in the nation.

Interest payments on the \$2.7 trillion national debt cost \$200 billion annually, making it the third-largest category of federal spending. American federal debt, which stood at 26 percent of national income in 1981, now stands at 52 percent.

At the heart of the deficit problem lie the entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicaid, and federal deposit insurance. These are legal obligations of the government to pay benefits to qualified citizens. They account for over 60 percent of federal spending, up from a 10

percent of the budget 30 years ago.

Entitlements are growing faster than the American economy: between 1970 and 1990, real spending increased by six percent per year while the economy grew at a measly rate of 2.7 percent. This is the first year in our history that government jobs outnumber manufacturing jobs.

Enter the candidates: Bush and Clinton. Both are proposing billions of dollars in programs, spending cuts, and deficit reductions in what can only be called the occult calculus of election-year politicking. Both are loath to touch the rapidly inflating entitlement programs.

A recent examination of the candidates' fiscal proposals in the Wall Street Journal found gigantic budget gaps. Bush's proposals for five years came up \$440 billion short. Clinton's proposals for four years were \$359 billion short. Just how the candidates propose to square these circles remains a mystery.

However, as November looms in the distance, overshadowing the headlines of political hand-wringing and promise-making, the candidates will find themselves on a collision course with the issue of deficit spending.

As the public continues to vent its anger over House members' inability to balance their checkbooks, the spotlight will turn to the national checkbook and to the leaders who write the bills.

Vice President Quayle would do well today as he addresses the university to broach the issue of the twin evils of debt and deficit; students whose future paychecks will be down-payments on the spending frenzies of today would do well to broach the issue with him.

Starting life over in the Year Zero

People must recognize that life indeed has purpose

"What is life for? To die? I am afraid. Then I must live. But what for? In order to die? I could not escape from that circle." —Leo Tolstoy

A newborn zebra stares intently at its mother's pattern during its first ten minutes of existence as the means to ensure lifetime identification.

We humans may take a bit longer, but eventually we find ourselves mesmerized by the hypnotic patterns of television, alcohol, sports, sex, pleasure-seeking and careerism.

It's high time to come down from the clouds and get into the business of finding out who we are — starting anew on the first day of the Year Zero.

The first step is putting things in perspective. Just how tenuous is our existence as individuals and as a part of the human race? Did you know that in the spring of 1989 an asteroid packing the power of 20,000 hydrogen bombs missed colliding with the Earth by six minutes?

How horrifying! Our very lives hang by a thread! Such cataclysmic bolts from the blue aside, there exists that eerie thought in the back of our minds that our country and planet are falling apart at an exponential rate. Hidden deep in the psyche, this disturbing notion is something we dare not dwell upon for too long. Exactly what are we afraid of?

Is it Ernest Hemingway's belief that "life is nothing but a dirty trick, a journey from nothingness to nothingness?" Or Jean Paul Sartre's notion that "man is absurd, but must grimly act as if he were not?"

One countermeasure to such gloom and doom is to place one's faith in human nature. Some will seek an anchor of "God and salvation" in various forms, choosing to believe that the man on his knees sees more than the philosopher/existentialist on his tiptoes.

Our parents and grandparents had the Nazi Holocaust, the 50 million deaths of World War II and the accompanying nuclear strike against Japan to teach them perspective. Our generation has MTV.

The second step is realizing our place in time and space. Did you realize that most 20th century Americans enjoy a lifestyle the kings and emperors of the ancient world never



ANTHONY C. LOBAIDO
Columnist

had? Ever consider that the average life expectancy in the Middle Ages was a "Logan's Run" of 30 years?

Why do we worry and stress over future careers that may or may not materialize when more than 80 percent of Americans claim to be unhappy with their careers? Why do we have so many policemen who harass, teachers concerned more with research than with helping students, and doctors in medicine for a buck? Then again, even the most successful career will rarely be as fulfilling as one would imagine. Ask any Hollywood star.

The third step is self actualization. Just what are we capable of as individuals and as a society? Did you know that Japan's invasion of Manchuria ultimately led 30 million Chinese to move 2,000 miles, literally carrying industrial and educational institutions on their backs to Sinkiang?

These same Chinese then constructed the infamous "Burma Road" with hand tools in 11 months. This after the top engineering firms in the West said it would take eight years to build the road — with the most modern equipment and machinery.

Did you know that the technology now exists to "terraform" Mars into a planet capable of supporting life? Yet, how can we bring such a dream to fruition when we are a people who invariably settle for less in almost every area of life?

The fourth step is acquiring vision. Did you know that Roy Norton's "The Vanishing Fleets," written in 1907, predicted Japan's sneak attack on America and the eventual nuclear response of the United States? Are there any such men and women left to guide us through the pitfalls of the next century? Where will we find the fire to go on and convince ourselves that the future is worth living for?

Throughout the march of human history the future has generally looked bleak. Yet our parents and grandparents tell us that out of the deepest pits of darkness, a light will eventually appear, and things will work out.

An example of this is the fact that over half of the European Jews who survived the Holocaust were under the age of 12.

Considering the purge they had endured and the collective spirit of the nation of Israel they would forge, it seems they were more like the zebras than we.

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47th EXPLANATION



MAIL CALL

Quayle should be heard, not heckled

As a member of the opposition party of the individual who will visit the Texas A&M student body and the residents of Brazos County, I would like to encourage everyone to give the Vice President the respect he deserves regardless of whether he reflects the views of the American people or more so some denomination of the multicultural American society.

I discussed Dan Quayle's visit with several of the members of Aggie Democrats, and it was concluded that no vocalized, planned organizational protest at Dan Quayle's speech would come about as a result of any effort of ours.

The prime reason behind this consideration was a Clinton/ Gore Rally and town meeting in Waco the week before

school started. In trying to learn more of the proposals of Gov. Clinton and Senator Gore and in the attempt to hear first-hand the great American political stump speeches, a vocal group that interrupted the speech periodically made for an unpleasant experience for everyone.

There were many people who wanted to experience first hand what many of us only get a glimpse of in classes such as American Oratory or Political Rhetoric. Vice President Quayle's visit to our community is a once in a lifetime chance for some people.

So that everyone has the opportunity to hear the alternately guided concepts of Dan Quayle, try not to act as did the anti-Clinton, anti-change, anti-Gore individuals heckling Hilary and Bill Clinton and Tipper and Al Gore. By such disruption one only hampers the open and free discourse of ideas upon which progress can be made.

Let the undecided voters hear Quayle's speech undistracted so that it may stand or ultimately fail by its merit alone.

We need to hear everyone's ideas and refrain from secret plans and distractions from the issues such as the economy, education and environment so that people are defined by what they propose rather than sullied by distortions from either side of the muddy fence.

However, for those that do feel it necessary to exercise the constitutionally endowed right of freedom of speech, the dissenters should be given due respect. We must all remember that Quayle is not visiting us as Vice President of the United States, but on the campaign trail as Mr. J. Danforth Quayle.

I'd like to add a call to the other side to refrain from the oft-recurring hubris which deceptively uplifts humankind only to let him/her fall so hard. Quayle thinks he will have an overwhelmingly warm reception.

It would not be a surprise to see several homemade signs showing displeasure with the current administration or in favor of Clinton given the fact that 31 percent of those who participated in the March primaries voted in the Democratic Party primary and the very strong on-campus, pro-change/pro-Perot people did not vote.

Do not let Quayle's visit to A&M be your last interaction with the campaign. Read the paper daily if you truly care to do your duty as a citizen and concerned member of society. And remember not only to vote but to cast an intelligent and thoroughly informed vote.

Keep hope alive for your future.

Patrick K. Gendron
Class of '94
President, Aggie Democrats

All Aggies should show consideration

I would like to express my anger and disappointment with my fellow Aggies that disrupted the Hispanic Unity Rally held on Thursday, Sept. 17. While the folkloric dance was in progress, a group of Aggies were throwing themselves in Rudder Fountain and yelling Aggie songs.

This is the sorriest form of showing Aggie Spirit.

We are all Aggies and we all deserve respect. These particular Aggies acted rudely and showed little if no respect to their fellow Aggies, who took much of their time and effort to perform.

My only hope is that this was done in ignorance instead of intentional disrespect.

We must all have an appreciation for each other, because we are all Aggies united by the Spirit of AggieLand.

I would like to apologize to the dancers on behalf of these rude Aggies. I would also like to send my congratulations to the dancers and leaders of the rally on an excellent presentation. I hope that in the future no Aggie will show such ignorant behavior.

Anamaria Salinas
Class of '96

Ain't no fans like the fans in AggieLand

I would like to thank all of the students at Texas A&M for attending the MSC Town Hall variety show. The Town Hall staff is the finest student organization I have ever worked with in my 8 years performing in the college market.

I hope the students at A&M realize what fine organization the Town Hall organization is. My only regret was that I did not record my show ... the A&M audience is the best!

David Naster
College Comedian of the Year

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