Plain talk
Nice try, but no cigar

COLUMN BY ROB BUKSAR



I hope most of you heard the president's last address to a joint session of Congress. If you didn't, it was here that he revealed again his plan that he claims will help restore our wounded economy. If you listened, did you understand what you heard?

Much of what was said was proposed before. It was tried, failed, and here it is again; infrastructure repair, public buildings, schools, roads, bridges and highways, etc. The only thing left out was the term "shovel ready" which Obama openly admitted was bogus. We'll forgive him for the "shovel ready" stuff, but a complete rehash of the same failed policy?

By the way, on the first and second go around of stimulus money, the funds were dispersed with little accountability. Hindsight revealed that no one seemed to know where all the money went. Furthermore, Congress could not pass a mandatory provision that domestically produced material be used in the implementation of these domestic programs. That would have created jobs not only for labor but for the material also. Well, that didn't happen, no thanks to our Congress, and neither did the results we were promised. Of course, that's history and that's not what this is about. So, let's look at some of the highlights of the proposed stimulus.

1. The president wants to find a bunch of money to hire new police officers, firefighters and schoolteachers. A noble idea. We can always use a few more good men and women in these positions. However, just like the last time this was tried, when the stimulus money runs out, who picks up the payrolls? The state and local communities can't afford them. That's why they got laid off in the beginning. So where do state and local get the money this time? Or do we just lay them off again and put them all back on unemployment compensation and food stamps? Maybe that's what Nancy Pelosi means when she said unemployment compensation is good for the economy.
2. How about extending unemployment benefits even longer? Aside from government-created "hard core unemployed," who else is getting hurt? What most don't understand is small business not only creates most of the new jobs, it also picks up the lion's share of the bill for the unemployed. The Fortune 1000 companies only employ approximately two percent of the domestic work force. The smaller companies pick up the bulk of the tab for state and federal unemployment tax. By the way, since unemployment has been extended so many times, ask your boss what this has done to his tax bill. You'll get an earful!
3. Business will get an additional $4,000 deduction for every new employee that's hired. Sooner or later, I hope someone explains to the current administration that we don't need incentives to hire people. We need customers and markets. When we are overwhelmed with more business and orders than we can currently contend with, we all will hire more help with or without a tax incentive. Our problem is we don't have enough customers or business. The current trade policies are killing us. We cannot compete!
4. I'm not sure that expanding and creating new trade deals such as NAFTA, CAFTA, GAT, Favored Nations, etc., is going to help us a whole lot on the domestic front. Obama said that he wants to see as many GM, Ford and Chryslers driving around South Korea as we do Hyundai and Kia here. Sounds cool but that just ain't gonna happen. You see, these trade deals really don't affect medium and small businesses. When a deal like this is cut, the big guys like Coke, Pepsi, GM, Ford, General Electric, etc., build factories in these other countries. They produce, bottle or package their products in the same country they're selling it to. They employ no American workers, pay no taxes, don't contribute to Social Security or the community and country in any significant way, or at least one that's worthwhile. So again, how does this help the good ole USA?

I am not sitting here in judgment of anyone, Republican or Democrat, conservative or liberal. I would just like someone to explain how my neighbors and I are benefiting from all these super deals.

It just seems that ever since Bill Clinton signed NAFTA in 1994, the trade deal that was to enrich us all, the quality of my life has been racing in the wrong direction. Furthermore, ever since we've adopted this fairness in social justice approach, I keep getting victimized and broker by the day.

These days we're no longer the country with endless opportunity. That's been replaced with endless government! In our history as a nation, we have never had as many people on the public payroll, supposedly looking out for all of our best interests. With that in mind, where the heck is all the opportunity and bright future we all had to look forward to? With all this government on our side, why are we broke and scared? Is this really the best we can do?

Mr. President, I truly appreciate your efforts but nice try, no cigar.

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