



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 19, 2011

## President Obama Pledges Spending Cuts Down to Eisenhower Era

At last Friday's press conference, President Obama reviewed the status of talks with Republicans over the debt ceiling and reiterated his determination to "get our fiscal house in order." He added: "We have a unique opportunity to do something big. We have a chance to stabilize America's finances for a decade, for 15 years, or 20 years, if we're willing to seize the moment."

"Now, what that would require would be some shared sacrifice and a balanced approach that says we're going to make significant cuts in domestic spending. And I have already said *I am willing to take down domestic spending to the lowest percentage of our overall economy since Dwight Eisenhower.* (emphasis added)



This extraordinary statement takes on additional importance when one realizes that this was part of the President's prepared remarks which means that someone deliberately inserted that into his presentation. And so, taking the President at his word, Greg Richards of [The American Thinker](#) looked into the matter to determine just how much of a cut in domestic spending it would take to bring Obama's spending down to the level it was under Eisenhower. Richards concluded that it would entail a reduction from current spending levels which exceed 25 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) down to 19 percent a reduction of 6 percentage points. With current GDP approaching \$15 trillion, a reduction of 6 percent is just under \$1 trillion a year. He concludes, if Obama means what he says, is that Obama's budget must be cut by One Trillion Dollars, starting immediately.

During the Eisenhower administration, the country's [GDP rose](#) from \$372 billion in 1953 to \$519 billion in 1960, while government spending rose from \$76 billion to \$92 billion over that period. As a percent of GDP, government spending varied between 16.5 percent and 20.4 percent, averaging at about 18 percent over eight years. Under the Obama administration, the nation's output grew slightly, from \$14.2 trillion to \$14.6 trillion, while government spending went from \$3.5 trillion to \$3.7 trillion, averaging 25 percent of GDP. So Richards' numbers, and his conclusion, are about right: if the president means what he says, if he is willing to take down domestic spending to the lowest percentage of our overall economy since Dwight Eisenhower, that means the president intends to cut government spending by one trillion dollars.

None of this was brought up during the question and answer session following his formal presentation, nor did any of the national media pick up on it either. Perhaps it was just a throwaway comment designed to add credibility to his determination to cut spending. Or perhaps it was because the president really doesn't mean what he says.



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After months of trying to come to terms with the Obama administration over the debt ceiling, House Speaker John Boehner remarked that dealing with them the last couple of months has been like dealing with Jell-o. Some days its firmer than others. Sometimes its like theyve left it out overnight. In exasperation over the failed talks last weekend, Boehner said that the president had backed off from previous commitments hed made concerning serious cuts in entitlement spending so much that It was Jell-o; it was dn near liquid.

Or Obamas comments may reflect his difficulty with numbers. Back in May 2008 while on the campaign trail, candidate Obama [told a crowd](#) that:

It is just wonderful to be back in Oregon, and over the last 15 months weve traveled to every corner of the United States. Ive now been in fifty seven states. I think [we have] one left to go.

In September of that year, Obama was [being interviewed](#) by George Stephanopoulos on *This Week* and tried to quiet rising criticism that he was a Muslim:

Lets not play games. What I was suggesting youre absolutely right that John McCain has not talked about my Muslim faith. And youre absolutely right

Immediately Stephanopoulos corrected him by interjecting your Christian faith. YouTube has the interview [here](#).

On April 6th, 2009, the president gave a speech in Strasbourg, Austria, and noted:

It was also interesting to see that political interaction in Europe is not that different from the United States Senate. Theres a lot of I dont know what the term is in Austrian wheeling and dealing

For the record, 88 percent of Austrians [speak German](#).

The president also has [trouble with his Social Security number](#). Two private investigators are suing in the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia asking why the president uses a Social Security number set aside for applicants in the state of Connecticut despite that fact that Obama didnt live there at the time he applied for it.

In May this year he visited Westminster Abbey and, while signing the guest register, [he dated it](#) 04 May 2008.

And during the question and answer session following his prepared remarks at the press conference on Friday, he answered a question about means testing Medicare:

Ive said that means testing on Medicare, meaning people like myself, if Im going to be turning 50 in a week so Im starting to think a little bit more about Medicare eligibility... (laughter)

His newly refreshed birth certificate [shows his birthday](#) as August 4th.

Whether the president is number-impaired, or date-impaired, or memory-impaired is irrelevant. Its now a matter of public record: the president is willing to take down domestic spending to the lowest percentage of our overall economy since Dwight Eisenhower, and the Republicans ought to hold him to that commitment.

*White House photo*



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