

"Fix It" Episode IX - The Final Chapter:

The final chapter....sounds dramatic, doesn't it? I'm just taking my cue from Desperate Housewives and House and such to draw you in. Maybe this will be as big as the last episode of M*A*S*H?!

Except that I'm not going to be satisfied with cable channel reruns like those shows. No, you will continue to hear from me about a variety of matters. But, it is time to wrap up our series on how we can fix our economy.

In the previous VIII Episodes, I have talked about strategies to address the too big to fail problem, repair our deficits, and set housing, energy, health care, education, infrastructure, and manufacturing all on a path to prosperity. Most of these strategies are built upon tenets that could elicit bipartisan support. And, every single problem I've addressed can be successfully resolved in the United States regardless of what happens in Europe or China or anywhere else. But, before I sign off from this series, there are 3 more points I would like to make:

Absolutism Will not Work: There are some of my colleagues on the right who believe that tax cuts can cure anything. There are some on the left who believe that more government spending is the magic elixir that will cure all our ills. There are those who believe that government involvement always has a bad effect in every area. There are those who subscribe to the opposite idea, believing that government involvement is always a good influence on any problem. They are all wrong. Absolutism on both sides is an impediment to progress. Honestly, it drives me nuts. If you look at all the areas we've talked about in this series, there is no one thread of solutions that run through every area of the economy. The state of housing is very different than that of health care or the deficit or energy. The problems are different. The solutions are different. We need to analyze challenges and come up with customized, tailor-made, specific solutions for each. There is no silver bullet for all.

To Infinity....and Beyond: Many of you know that I am about as big a deficit hawk as there is in Congress. I very rarely ever support more spending. But, there is one place I will make an exception: space exploration. Whether it be continuing to discover what is on the surface of Mars or embarking on some other major exploration of our universe, study of space is important to our future. It seems that as a society, we have stopped dreaming the big dreams. It seems

today that we are inwardly focused on the foibles we foist upon ourselves due to human failings. I am not suggesting that we suddenly stop and ignore those considerations. But, we must also continue to advance the frontiers of the human experience. We should do this, in part, because it inspires us to think and achieve great things. But, we should also do it because our species has and will benefit from it. This is why, for millennia, governments have financed human exploration. Keep in mind that the fruits of exploration rarely inure to the benefit of the people or even the generation doing the exploring. That's why we must be always investing in that exploration. It may be decades or even centuries before the human race receives the benefits. Consider the effects of the discoveries by Columbus (financed by the then government of Spain) or the technology gained from going to the moon in 1969 (financed by the taxpayers of the United States). In fact, I vividly remember watching Neil Armstrong's touchdown on the moon. And, remember that we were at the height of the divisive war in Vietnam at the time. But Americans, and yes, people all over the world, have never been prouder than they were at that moment. On my bucket list, before the Lord calls me home, is a hope that I will one day see humans on Mars on a holographic screen in my home. I will do all I can in Congress towards that end. As Gene Roddenberry included in the preamble to every Star Trek TV show, space is "the final frontier". Let's dream big again. So, in the words of Captain Jean Luc Picard of the Starship Enterprise from TNG (Star Trek: The Next Generation), "Make it so".

And...Beyond Europe: As I write this, the troubles in Europe multiply. They have huge problems of their own making and I do not see any positive outcome. I think it is not a question of if restructuring will occur, but when will it happen, how will it happen, and how severe will its consequences be on the rest of the world? We obviously have no control over what they do or don't do. But, we will be affected by what happens. The continent of Europe is too big a part of the world economy to not have a decline in some way impact us very measurably. We must prepare for this outcome. But, that is not the main point of this paragraph. It must be pointed out how often the President has held up something in Europe as the example of what we should do. Health care, taxes, global warming activism, high-speed trains, solar energy, even their culture - we have heard it all for the last 4 years. Europe has it right and we have it wrong. I'm sorry Mr. President, European socialism has failed.....again. They cannot pay for the socialism they have promised their people. And, we can't afford it either. It must now be clear to any rational observer that we need to be less like Europe and more like.....America. American enterprise, American culture, American entrepreneurship and American invention are what we need more of here. I want our European friends to succeed because they are our allies, because our history prior to 1776 is their history, and because a prosperous Europe will help make a more prosperous America. But, promising endless benefits that are mostly financed through borrowing, and that require little work to secure, has not worked for them and it will not work for us.

The Way Forward: A new, two decade-long period of American hegemony, prosperity and growth...it is there before us. We can seize it all on our own. And, the troubled rest of the world needs us to grow to pull them out of their malaise because they cannot do it on their own. And,

we can. All we need is the courage and the leadership to do so.

Drive fast....and live free!