



Research

The Era of Big Government is Over

JANUARY 24, 2011

In January of 1996, Bill Clinton proclaimed in his State of the Union Address, the “era of Big government is over.” Ah, if that only were the case.

That remarkable speech came to mind as I thought about President Obama’s address this time around.

Mr. Clinton didn’t just talk about the size and scope of government back then. He lambasted Hollywood for poisoning our youth with its content. He boasted about his efforts to crack down on crime. He pushed hard for welfare reform.

In other words, when it came to his strategy to move to the center, he went all in.

Republicans were aghast. He was stealing their issues. He was talking like a Republican, but he was still a liberal at heart. Republicans knew that if Clinton governed like them, he would be hard to beat.

They were right. He was hard to beat and Bob Dole didn’t put up much of a fight.

I doubt Barack Obama will say tomorrow night that the era of big government is over.

By all reports, he will talk about more investment and more spending. Sure, he may say a few words about being fiscally responsible. But it is highly doubtful that his address tonight will mimic the truly Republican-light address of Mr. Clinton.

But if Mr. Obama does want to move to the center, he ought to re-read that speech.

In this Tea-party Congress, nothing would annoy Republicans more than for President Obama to steal their issues. But GOP annoyance would also mean general happiness for the vast center of the country.

The American people want smaller, smarter government and a return to that era when big government was a thing of the past.

They probably won’t get it from Mr. Obama, but it would be something if they did.

This originally appeared on [The Feehery Theory](#) on January 24, 2011.