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The Pyramid

A pyramid is only stable because of the sturdy base. Without a sturdy base the entire structure will collapse. Like a pyramid, the United States’ success and wellbeing depends on the stability of the base, or the people that make up the United States. Between the high unemployment rate, climate change issues and international turmoil, it is difficult to identify the most important problem that should be addressed. According to the Pyramid Analogy though, it seems only logical to address the people and the United States itself first so that we can help improve the other issues facing the country in the future.

The most productive way to support the base of the United States is to create more jobs so that the people can support themselves. In the discussion of the next four years, Robert Reich, former Secretary of labor in the Clinton administration, would agree that the main focus should be on creating jobs, not reducing the deficit. He advocates that the only way to improve the economy and deficit is “to create more good jobs, grow the economy and widen the circle of prosperity” (Reich, 8 November 2012). In order to “widen this circle of prosperity” he emphasizes increasing government spending on projects that will improve the overall economy. While some people might question the idea of increasing spending, according to Reich, increasing spending would further allow the middle class to expand and grow. He stresses that spending money on programs will help the economy grow in the long term not just the short term. By investing in programs like education, job training and infrastructure, the government would help people maintain jobs once they are hired. Currently, the division between the middle and upper class is getting larger. If the middle class can be widened and this gap between classes reduced, Reich believes that we can achieve a more stable and successful economy.

While strengthening the position of employees in the nation is important, Elaine Chao, former Labor Secretary, believes that addressing the employers and making it easier to run a successful business is possibly more critical. The success of the economy boils down to what supports it, which are the businesses and the people. She advocates that reducing marginal tax rates and focusing on supporting entrepreneurs and young business owners will help create more jobs. By reducing government regulations and taxes more entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to build up their businesses and hopefully in the future employ more people. If the business owners have fewer regulations to follow they will not only working businesses, but also successful ones that can expand and improve. She points out that “confidence among those considering starting or expanding businesses takes a hit with every headline about higher taxes, expensive government mandates, overzealous regulators, litigation and federal fiscal recklessness” (Chao, 8 November 2012). If young entrepreneurs are not willing to start new companies, it will be harder to create more jobs for the people. If the entrepreneurs do not have confidence in their own businesses because of all the regulations, they cannot run prosperous businesses. Without businesses, there cannot be a working class, which Chao realizes is the problem. If we can build up confident employers and employees, we can further expand the confidence and power of the country as a whole.

While Chao and Reich think the government should focus on building up the internal issues in the economy, Samuel Berger, former National Security Advisor, believes it is best to work on external issues. Berger urges the president to lead other nations into prosperity so that, in turn, the US can gain power around the world and protect itself from the dangerous demise of other countries. In Iran, Berger warns the president to make a decision on the nuclear program while in Syria he acknowledges the fact that the US may need to make a decision on whether to interfere with the issues with President Assad. He recognizes that there is a civil war involving countries in the Middle East and that the turmoil continues to persist. Berger’s proposals focus heavily on external affairs, which he believes, is of utmost importance.

While Berger makes a valid point that we must think about interfering with the issues of other nations, I insist that the first priority of the president and the US government should be to focus on internal affairs and issues. Berger points out the issues in Syria with President Assad regarding the hostility and opposition of him and the ongoing fear that comes with the civil war. This is obviously an important issue especially when human lives are on the line, but we must think about the best way to use our resources without causing more damage to the people of Syria and ourselves. It seems slightly hypocritical to focus on the opposition within other countries when we do not even know how to handle the disagreement within our own country. In the United States, we too, have strikes between the wealthy and the lower class and continue to struggle to make decisions because our government is so divided. Although our division is not nearly as violent as the strikes in Syria and our government is not killing people who oppose them, we are not able to put our full efforts into help with Syria because our country does not have all the resources. If we improve the issues in our country, we could then put a full effort into helping Syria and other countries. Berger only lists a few of the struggling countries, like Syria and Iran but there are many more countries like Greece and Egypt that have just as many issues as Syria. If we were to focus on international affairs how would we determine which country to aid first? One issue is that we do not have the money or power to help every struggling country in the world. Every day there continue to be fights breaking out around the world that we cannot possible stop them all. The best way to help all the countries is to focus on improving the United States first, so that we have more resources and control to help other countries in the future.

Berger provides ample evidence that helping other countries will be valuable, but Chao and Reich’s ideas on creating more jobs and building the confidence of business owners convinces me that boosting up the working class will in turn allow for improvement on other issues that the country faces, like external affairs. Much of Reich’s ideas take into account the long-term success and progression of the country. His theory of “widening the circle of prosperity” is extremely useful because it sheds light on the importance of bettering the middle class (Reich, 8 November 2012). Because Reich believes the deficit is proportional to the size of the economy, he thinks that improving the overall economy will in turn improve other aspects of the economy like the deficit. Since the size of the economy can be linked to many aspects of the government, improving it as a whole could also lessen other problems like the issues in international relations and climate change. Reich believes that spending a lot of money on the expansion of the economy through programs like education, job training programs and investment in infrastructure projects will help the country as a whole which could also allow for more spending on environmental issues and foreign affairs. I believe Reich is right in the fact that once the economy as a whole is stronger, the people will have more means to support other issues. If there is a bigger base that supports the country, then there can be a bigger and more successful economy.

It is often difficult to make a decision on issues, especially when there are so many problems and so many people involved in them. It is important to solve the bigger problems with our own economy so that we have more means to improve other issues. Without the people, there would be no United States of America, which is why job creation and the support of entrepreneurs will be critical for a more successful future. Although the problems surrounding the economy and the US in general are daunting, if we can work from the bottom up, we can successfully and effectively rebuild our economy.

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