"The economy has collapsed! And it's Obama's fault!" That's the rightwing reaction to the 0.1% shrinking of the GDP in the 4th quarter, never mind that the year overall was pretty good considering the Republican agenda. The reality is that the GDP is being depressed by the loss of exports to Europe because of their idiotic austerity measures, and the reduction in military spending as the endless war on terror is finally coming to an end. That, and the Mitt Romney crowd's practice of closing down high tech factories and shipping them to China, - also the 'job creators who run corporate America are driving down wages.

The 'New Normal' of global warming, super storm Sandy, also had a significant impact on the GDP. And ironically, Obamacare has cut the amount of money draining into the insurance company/corporate hospital industrial complex. This also reduces the Gross Domestic Product.

Consumer confidence is down simply because nobody knows how to plan for the future when their job could disappear tomorrow in order to further line the pockets of people who can't even begin to spend the money they're making now. Not that the rich don't try, the super rich spend more on their lifestyles in a few months than the bulk of the Republican voting base can hope to make in a lifetime. Of course, the consequence of this is that as an ever increasing portion of our economy is sold to China, the more the rich need to squeeze from what's left to maintain the lifestyles of the rich and famous.

GDP is not a perfect measure of what the economy is doing, that is in a good vs bad evaluation of our society. Econ 101: if you want to increase the GDP, buy a sledge hammer and go around breaking windows, and then replace them. We could start spending on stimulus in any number ways: like infrastructure building, increasing the minimum wage, adjusting entitlements to more accurately reflect the cost of living, paying for education instead of creating student debt, and also forgiving the existing student debt.

All of these measures would light a fire under the economy. The Republicans know these this, that's why they're out in force pushing the notion that Keynesian economics doesn't work, and austerity is the only way to go. At the same time they decry the cuts to military spending because it hurts the economy. This goes all the way back to the beginning of civilization. Save during 'good times'; spend during 'bad times'. They even talk about this in the Bible, not that the rightwingers have ever read the book that they hold up as a badge of authority.

Our problems aren't that 'big', we are really in a 'good' place. That is, if we seize the reins and go in direction that favors the economy as a whole, instead of favoring the 18 billionaires at the top. None of what has happened to us was really a random occurrence.. Even the new 'super storms' from global warming are something to be expected, and to be dealt with.

Do we behave like liberals or conservatives? Are we like the US Marines who predate the United States? They have always pulled together, and no one is ever left behind, and they march toward the sound of the guns. Or are we the mythical 'rugged individual American' who has no stake in society, but achieves vast riches on his own?

Do you fight for the 'crown'? That is, the god appointed sovereign, the Republican oligarch, the rich guy who owns your ass? Or, do we pull together for the good of every man, your family, your fellow man, your values? It's your choice, it's time to choose.

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