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Many Conservatives Seek To Destroy Programs That Aid The Poor, Working Class

In listening to President Obama's "State of the Union Address" this year, one of the things that struck me is how many of us have been taken in by this whole hoopla around "...big government is bad; small government is good..." In fact, much of what Obama suggested was a contradiction in terms whereby he was advocating greater investment in the future, while at the same time, slashing budgets and freezing wages. So, let me offer a few thoughts.

First, what no one in elite politics seems to want to talk about is that the budget deficit and debt are largely the result of the reckless spending of the Bush administration in getting us into two wars, compounded by declining revenues as a result of the Great Recession. Thus, the discussions about cutting domestic spending in order to address the deficit miss the point entirely. To address the deficit, we really need to end the wars and occupations.

Except for one thing. The conservative politicians who are raising this issue know full well that

domestic spending is not the root of the problem. What they wish to do, however, is to cut programs



TRANS AFRICA

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that are to the benefit of poor and working people. It all goes back to

So, what is at stake is really a struggle between two different conceptions of government.

a strategy introduced by Reagan and his advisor David Stockman whereby they sought to cut the ability of government to increase resources to address the poor and working people by bringing about a budgetary crisis.

So, what is at stake is really a struggle between two different conceptions of government. When

the conservatives attack big government you have to ask them what are they talking about. Are they suggesting cutting the military? Usually not. How about police and prisons? Almost never. So, what are they talking about?

What is being attacked as so-called Big Government are things like veterans' programs and benefits; the postal service; food safety inspection (to make sure that we are not poisoned); housing programs; occupational health and safety programs at work; environmental protection to make sure that we are not contaminated by the waste left over by corporate America; jobs for those who lack them; not to mention any significant investment in rebuilding the infrastructure of this country.

What these programs have in common is that they are focused on the average person, rather than the rich. They are programs that, when they work well, decrease the polarization of wealth and strengthen the ability of working people to stand on their own. This is what the conservatives wish to undermine.

There is nothing particularly wrong with Big Government. It is more a question of what government is doing or not doing, and the extent to which government is serving the people rather than acting as a weight on top of them. Thus, when the conservatives attack healthcare reform, they are not saying that the legislation that passed did not go far enough. No, they are saying that government should stay out of the way of the insurance companies and healthcare industry in their quest for profits on top of our bodies.

The next time someone says something to you about so-called Big Government ask them what they are prepared to see shut down. If they are able to answer coherently, their answer will tell you a great deal about their character and, indeed, about their humanity.

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Social, Economic Progress in Egypt Will Affect The Entire Continent

The cry for change and freedom across Egypt sheds a prophetic light on the future of the entire continent of Africa. As the media from around the world continues to be focused on the massive street demonstrations that called for a change of the leadership in Egypt, it is incumbent for African Americans to see the broader socioeconomic, political, and cultural implications. Egypt is one of the oldest nations in the world. It has a diverse population of more than 80 million people. While the Western media characterizes Egypt as an Arab nation located in the Middle East, it is actually located in Northern Africa and is an African nation.

African people on the continent and throughout the Diaspora of African people should be interested in the ultimate outcome of the current crisis in Egypt. In the 21st Century, the majority of people in Egypt and throughout Africa are demanding an end to centuries of poverty. All governments should be critically aware that the elimination of poverty has to be a top priority. The failure of political leaders to take effective steps to end poverty will only certainly encourage the cry and demand for political change.

If you looked at what demographic of people that mainly got the movement for change going inside of Egypt, it was overwhelmingly young people. The

youth of Africa are demanding and taking social action for change. Such was the case in Egypt,

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Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, the Ivory Coast and in the Sudan. How are the youth taking social action? First through the use of the Internet and social media: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other Internet services. The first peace-

matched with their ability to use technology in a sustained, disciplined manner.

The end result of what will happen in Egypt is in the hands of the Egyptian people. The emerging leadership of new youthful leaders is encouraging. When the government of Egypt led by President Hosni Mubarak made a decision early in the crisis to cut off the Internet access to millions of Egyptians, it only showed the Egyptians and others throughout the world how useful the Internet can be as a tool to bring about

taking place in Egypt to remember that 2012 is next year and their voices and votes need to be counted in the next national elections in the United States.

The truth is more must be done also here as well to end poverty and injustice. While what is now happening in Egypt and in other parts of Africa or in other nations may seem like a far away place, we live in a closer global village. We should learn from the situation in Egypt. We should be more than a distant witness. We offer our prayers and support to the people of Egypt. We hope that the final transition of leadership and outcome will serve the interests and aspirations of the Egyptian people.

The future of Africa will be determined by African people. Poverty should be eliminated everywhere. We all have to work harder to ensure more social and economic progress. The cry for human freedom and a better way of life is a universal cry. Because of our history, as an African people, we cannot and should not ever turn a deaf ear to others who yearn and struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. We stand in solidarity with our Egyptian brothers and sisters.

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ful street protests in Egypt were actually organized by the April 6 Youth Movement.

The point here is to emphasize, once again, the importance of youth consciousness and youth activism. Whether it is in Africa, Europe, Asia, or in the Americas, the youth of the world are justified in their demands and actions to end poverty, corruption, war and injustice. The youth of Egypt should be saluted for their sense of moral and political outrage

social change.

Of course, we all remember how useful and game-changing it was in 2008 for the election of President Barack Obama to use the Internet and social media to mobilize millions of new young voters. But, the Tea Party and others in opposition to President Obama will be using that same technology to benefit their politics. It would be well if millions of African American, Latino and other youth who are witnessing what is now