

## OBAMA'S SPEECH: Has the campaign begun?

Written by Editorial Staff

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Was President Barack Obama's State of the Union address on Tuesday night a true accounting of where this country is and where we are heading, or the jump-start to a re-election campaign?

In truth, it was much more of the latter than the former.

President Obama was at his public-speaking best addressing Congress. He spoke of big ideas and big plans - and did so with his customary flair and speaking brilliance. But what he didn't do was truly address the problems facing this country, nor did he outline any solid path for our future. It was the same type of speech that won him the presidency two years ago - and one he hopes will do the same two years from now.

There is no doubt the President has moved towards the center after the wake-up call elections in November. He talks more of civility and bipartisanship and he brings to light conservative viewpoints - against the wishes of many in his own party. But he won't take a stand and truly attack those issues, hoping the public only hears the words instead of actually looking for action.

Take this country's risen debt, the number one issue facing our government. President Obama spent approximately 10 percent of his speech addressing our debt issues. He stated that he's open to reforming the tax code for individuals and he proposed a five-year freeze on federal spending. Both make for good sound bites, but neither are a pro-active approach to deficit reduction.

The spending freeze only affects a tiny portion of the budget - and will be a very slow process. What is needed is spending cuts and program reform - neither of which got more than a mere mention Tuesday night. Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security have a stranglehold on this country, yet no politician is willing to take the public relations hit by offering up true reform.

The President did say that there will need to be painful sacrifices made to right the economic ship. We only wish he would have at least tried to offer some suggestions on those sacrifices.

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Tuesday's address just sounded a little too much like an old Obama campaign speech. Let the race begin.