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Obama Claims Solyndra "Not Our Program, Per Se"

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After once touting Solyndra as a success story, President Obama sought to distance himself from the now-bankrupt and scandal-plagued manufacturer of solar panels, blaming Congress and China for the debacle instead of accepting responsibility. Critics of the administration promptly blasted the comments.

"Obviously, we wish Solyndra hadn't gone bankrupt," Obama said during a radio interview about the company he visited in 2010 to praise the government's half-baked subsidy program. "Part of the reason they did was because the Chinese were subsidizing their solar industry and flooding the market in ways that Solyndra couldn't compete."

It was not just China though, according to Obama. "But understand: This was not our program, per se," he continued. "Congress — Democrats and Republicans — put together a loan guarantee program because they understood historically that when you get new industries, it's easy to raise money for startups, but if you want to take them to scale, oftentimes there's a lot of risk involved, and what the loan guarantee program was designed to do was to help startup companies get to scale."

Of course, it is true that Congress authorized the unconstitutional "stimulus" bill to further subsidize "green" ventures that investors did not find worthy enough to finance. It is also a fact that the communist dictatorship ruling mainland China — to its own economic detriment — is subsidizing production of solar panels, as are other governments around the world.

But according to critics of the administration and its highly politicized program doling out tax money to favored companies, the President must accept responsibility for the fiasco. "We can see the positive impacts right here at Solyndra," Obama claimed in May of 2010. "Less than a year ago, we were standing on what was an empty lot. But through the [stimulus] Recovery Act, this company received a loan to expand its operations."

Then he boasted of how successful his schemes would be. "This new factory is the result of those loans," he observed. "Before the [stimulus] Recovery Act, we could build just 5 percent of the world's solar panels. In the next few years, we're going to double our share to more than 10 percent." In a 2009 White House e-mail released to Congress, administration officials even claimed Solyndra would be key in "supporting the president's manufacturing strategy."

Unfortunately for taxpayers, who forked over more than half of a billion dollars for Obama's failed solar-power scandal, Solyndra fired all of its employees and declared bankruptcy in August of last year. The public will almost certainly never recover its ill-spent funds.

Plus, the controversy is about more than just one failed company — which happened to be backed by major Obama campaign contributor George Kaiser — receiving federal funds before going bankrupt and leaving taxpayers holding the bag. It is about the Constitution, the free market, and a never-ending parade of government waste.

The President's remarks are "just another example of Obama saying anything to deflect from his failed policies," Republican Party spokeswoman Kirsten Kukowski was quoted as saying by *USA Today*. "He was happy to tout Solyndra two years ago when he thought it was helpful to him but now that it's failed and cost taxpayers millions of dollars it's someone else's fault."

More than a few Democrats are upset, too. And even the *Washington Post* called out Obama for the deception. "Success has a thousand fathers. Failure is an orphan. We were reminded of that aphorism when we saw Obama's comments this week regarding the origin of the government loan program that funded now-bankrupt Solyndra," the paper noted.

"We find it hard to believe that any reasonable person could interpret Obama's remarks this week as anything but a distinct effort to put the blame for Solyndra in someone else's pocket," the *Post's* Glenn Kessler noted in the "Fact Checker" section, awarding Obama two "Pinocchios" representing "significant omissions and/or exaggerations" in his statements. "The president should accept responsibility, not shirk it."

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The administration defended itself from accusations of impropriety, and not just for shoveling taxpayer money at Solyndra. Scores of other companies backed by Uncle Sam have gone bankrupt too – a few of them even went bust almost immediately after receiving federal money.

Two Committees in the House of Representatives are currently investigating the growing scandals. And both probes have found a pattern of disturbing information from the administration and the Department of Energy in particular.

"The paper trail released by the White House portrays a disturbingly close relationship between President Obama's West Wing inner circle, campaign donors, and wealthy investors that spawned the Solyndra mess," noted Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) and Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Fla.), both of whom serve on the Energy and Commerce Committee investigating the solar company scandal.

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, meanwhile, is looking at the broader picture: Obama's failed "green" energy policies and the ongoing "stimulus" scandal. And it, too, found a pattern of systematic problems.

"The Committee is actively investigating the DOE's implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which has been plagued by missed goals, waste of taxpayer funds, and loan guarantees to companies that have failed," charged Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), the chairman of the Committee, in a letter to Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "The American people have a right to know why DOE, under your leadership, has wasted billions of dollars of their money."

One of the controversial DOE-sponsored firms being investigated by Issa's Committee, Beacon Power, quickly went bankrupt despite over \$40 million in taxpayer subsidies. And Nevada Geothermal, according to investigators, was already on the verge of failure when the federal government approved a \$100-million loan guarantee. Rep. Issa even suggested the Nevada company loan was just a "bailout" of the collapsing firm's creditors.

Chu and other members of the administration have been so uncooperative during the inquiries that Congress has been forced to issue subpoenas and even threaten to bring contempt charges. But last week, after significant delays, the administration handed over a few more of the documents sought by congressional investigators. According to news reports, the information included over 400 pages of previously unreleased White House e-mail communications related to Solyndra.

"These documents, like the over 187,000 pages previously provided by Executive Branch agencies, demonstrate what we have said throughout the course of this investigation: decisions on the Solyndra loan guarantee were made on the merits by the Department of Energy," claimed administration attorneys. "None of the documents support the committee's allegations about favoritism to campaign contributors or improper White House involvement in the decision-making process."

In reality, the new e-mails did [reveal](#) some interesting anecdotes. As the White House learned that Solyndra was on the verge of collapse, for example, a massive propaganda effort spanning multiple departments was set in motion to manage the inevitable scandal's press coverage.

House Republicans also noted that many of the documents requested have not yet been handed over. And the investigation will continue, according to news reports.

Incredibly, instead of learning a lesson from the spectacular failure of "green" subsidies costing taxpayers billions of dollars, Obama is now on tour [touting more of the same policies](#). And the Labor Department even issued a [study](#) showing how many Americans – thanks largely to government-mandated misallocation of resources – were employed in so-called "green" jobs.

"When you look at the overall portfolio, is it right for us to make sure that we're not just cashing in our chips and letting the Chinese or the Germans develop the technologies that we know are going to be critical in the future?" Obama asked during the radio interview with the Marketplace program. "I'm proud to say that we're going to continue to support it."

Meanwhile, Germany recently [decided to slash subsidies](#) for solar power. The communist regime ruling China is on the verge of an economic cataclysm due in large part to central planning, according to analysts. And in Spain, where "green" jobs were heavily supported by tax money, the economy continues to crumble as unemployment hovers at record levels.

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Photo: President Barack Obama, accompanied by Solyndra Chief Executive Officer Chris Gronet, right, looks at a solar panel during a tour of Solyndra, Inc., a solar panel manufacturing facility, in Fremont, Calif., May 26, 2010.: AP Images

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ILXas said:



COME ON!

Really? This actually is happening.

The Obama Administration likes to complain that China's subsidization of their industries hurts American Businesses. This is exactly the same thing we do for our farmers and oil companies (not necessarily a good thing) so that statement stinks of pussy-footed blame-shifting.

In providing subsidies, a government takes money from citizens in the form of taxes, and hands it over to the industry it wishes to subsidize. If the company benefits, the country benefits and the people benefit to a lesser extent. If the company fails, the government takes no damage and the burden falls completely on the taxpayers; i.e. they just got robbed and have no legal recourse for compensation. Even if they were to successfully sue their government, guess where the compensation money comes from? Their own wallets (Tax money)!

So if China (not a pure communist government btw) wants to take risks with its own money, let them. They seem to have plenty of extra spending money from all the interest we keep paying them on our debts anyway.

However, that is not the way we do things in the United States (or at least it shouldn't be). We privatize our risk so that it doesn't hurt everybody and this takes away the incentive for investors to put money into unduly risky ventures.

March 27, 2012

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