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Founder's Message: New Year's Resolution

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It seems to me that when I first entered the world of business (early sixties), the government pretty much followed the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, made sure that the basic laws were followed, and stayed out of the business world. The average governed (that's you and me) trusted that the people we voted for (senators and congressmen) sincerely represented us in Washington. Few of us knew what salaries they were paid or what medical plans they were given. Most of us just assumed that it was so special to be selected to those important positions we could go on with our daily lives knowing that we were being fairly represented.

Another thing that the governed (that's us) never think about is that we (in a democracy) own the country and thus pay the country's bills (taxes). The members of government work for us. We are their bosses. The first thing I learned as a serious businessman is that the government doesn't have a clue on how to run a business (no Presidents in my lifetime ever owned a business). And it didn't take the government long to bankrupt the railroad (Amtrack) and the governed have been paying that deficit for years.

More recently we have been informed that the government-controlled postal service is broke, along with Social Security - that money is taken from your hard earned check every week and is supposedly saved for your retirement. It has recently been revealed that Freddie Mac is broke, Medicare and Medicaid are broke. The Department of Energy, that was created in 1977 now has 16,000 employees and a budget of \$24 billion, and we now import more oil than ever before. Go figure. The next government owned business will be healthcare that will affect all of us.

Are you worried yet? And here is something that even the smartest of us have not really been aware of - how much money the government gives away to foreign countries that you and I have no vote about. Supposedly, over 80% of these countries (or more) vote against us in the U.N. Pakistan \$2 billion, Libya \$1.4 billion, Egypt \$397 million, Haiti \$1.4 billion, Russia \$380 million, Iraq \$1.08 billion, Hamas \$351 million - and many, many

more. What do we get in return? Most of them hate us, so I am not sure. And this is money that we do not have. So where does it come from? We either borrow it or we print it. And the more we print, the less your hard earned dollar is worth. So 10 years from now the \$100,000 that you have saved for a rainy day will be worth half, or less.

Oops. Bad planning by you. Is there an answer? Hey, if we own the country, and it is run on our money, I guess that means that we have to come up with the answers.

Well respected Warren Buffet suggests that maybe those who we elect should have shorter terms, be accountable, not be allowed to vote themselves raises, and not be paid the same salary for the rest of their lives. Gee - that seems to make common sense. What have we been waiting for? Sorry for getting carried away with what is going on that the governed (that's us) have nothing to really say about. In a Democracy we are supposed to have something to say about stuff. Any good ideas? By

the way, my New Year's resolution is: Learn more about what is happening and do my best to care.
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