

Give me liberty

**Your on the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

Give me Liberty or Give me Dollars!

Give me Liberty, or Give me Dollars!

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Hello from Your on the Street Reporter. Much is being made about America's recent showings of weakness around the globe, staying away from Libya, Syria, the Crimea, and other places vital to America's liberty. The country's citizens wonder why their military is not being called out to meet these clear and present dangers. President Obama has been pilloried by both liberals and conservatives after posing the question, "Why is it that everybody is so eager to use military force?" According to *The Economist*, "America's cerebral president betrayed a rare flash of frustration on April 28th when dealing with a question in Asia about his country's 'weakness.'"¹

In the meantime:

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*The Your on the Street Reporter Guru resides in the sky, overlooking his journalistic subjects. He insures his minions leave their arm chairs and actually unearth... gasp!... facts, instead of using others' efforts and offering second hand opinions during their television shows. He's also called the "Guru in the Sky" to differentiate himself from those self-appointed gurus on earth. He's an all-powerful being, with an impressive translucent, ephemeral countenance. Even hard-core reporters hold him in awe. The Guru is observing one particular reporter this morning.*

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Hello, Your on the Street Reporter is on the street again. The Reporter Guru roused me from my armchair to investigate an issue that is currently upsetting America's citizens. So today, I'm doing interviews with American citizens who are also on the street. Ah, here's a candidate coming this way.

- Reporter: "Excuse me sir, may I have a word with you?"
- Citizen: "Get out of my way."
- "There's money in it for you."
- "How can I help you?"
- Looking back on it now, do you think America should have invaded Afghanistan and Iraq and stayed in those countries for years?"
- "Is this a trick question? Of course! How else could we have defended America's liberty?"
- Reporter: "Sir, after dislodging the Afghan terrorists, America was not in danger from Afghanistan. And America was *never* in danger from Iraq. The supposed weapons of mass destruction in Iraq was found to be a deception and a chimera, aided by decades-old grudges between senior government officials and Saddam Hussein."
- Citizen: "Okay. We were protecting our way of life."
- "In what way?"
- "By spreading democracy, the only way to live. By spreading Christianity, the only way to worship. By spreading capitalism, the only way to make a living."

¹ "What would America fight for," *The Economist*, May 3, 2014, 9.

- Reporter: “So your idea of protecting the American way of life is to spread its beliefs, and change the beliefs of others and their way of life?”
- Citizen: “Absolutely, in every nook and cranny on earth. Otherwise, they’ll make trouble for us. We change their way of life before they change ours. That way we avoid preventive wars. No sacrifice is too great for protecting our liberty. Each American must meet the call for freedom!”
- Reporter: “Avoid preventive wars? Changing a country’s religion, governance, and its financial system would likely require going to war with the country. That’s called a preemptive war, sir.”
- Citizen: “A war here, a war there. They’re minor side effects of making sure America’s liberty is safe.”

At which time:

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*Rumble! Rumble! Rumble! Lightning lights the sky. Thunder breaks the china. The Reporter Guru has turned back the clock from the present to a past time. The Reporter on the Street is interviewing the same person. After the greeting:*

- Reporter, “I have a proposition. We have gone back into your past, but the Guru in the Sky will allow you to make a choice that will affect your future. Your answer will have great import. So think about it carefully before you respond.”
- The response from the past but soon to be present typical American citizen: “Will do. What’s the question?”

While looking at this past man of the future, the reporter dips into his pocket and pulls out a huge roll of money. He displays the money to his interviewee. This wad of loot is not lost on the man. Dollar signs appear in each pupil. The dollar signs are so large, they also take-up space in each iris.

- “Looking forward, do you think America should invade Afghanistan and Iraq?”
- Citizen: “Is this a trick question? Of course! How else will we be able to defend America’s liberty?”
- Reporter, “This roll of money is \$15,000 in U.S. dollars. It represents what each man, woman, and child will pay to support these two wars.”
- Citizen, “That’s a third of what will be my yearly paycheck. What I could do with that cash when I go back to the present! ...Hm, you say that \$15,000 will pay for those wars?”
- Reporter: “Yes. \$15,000 multiplied by 320 million people equals \$5,000,000,000,000. That is going to be the costs to American citizens of these wars. If you are numerically challenged, that’s 5 trillion dollars. But the Guru in the Sky allows me to hand this money to you on one condition.”
- Citizen, whose vision of the dollar sign is now taking-up space in his corneas, is transfixed: “Any chance of borrowing a few of those future zeros?”
- Reporter: “You could have three of those zeros, but only the ones to the far right side of the figure. The zeros on the far left side are reserved for lobbyists, lawmakers, and Wall Street investment bankers. ”

- Citizen: "I'll take what I can get, so what's your deal?"
- The Guru in the Sky has authorized me to hand-over this \$15,000 to you, but only if you decree these two wars never took place. As I said, your answer will have great impact."
- Citizen: "Whew! But what about all those turban-wearing sinners who will never know the truth? What about those communists and socialists? They'll never own a mortgage-backed security? What about America's place in every nook and cranny on earth?"

The citizen ruminates over this conundrum, but not for long.

- Citizen: "I must ask one question."
- Reporter: "Yes?"
- "Is the 15 grand tax-free?"
- "It is."
- "Consider it a done deal!"