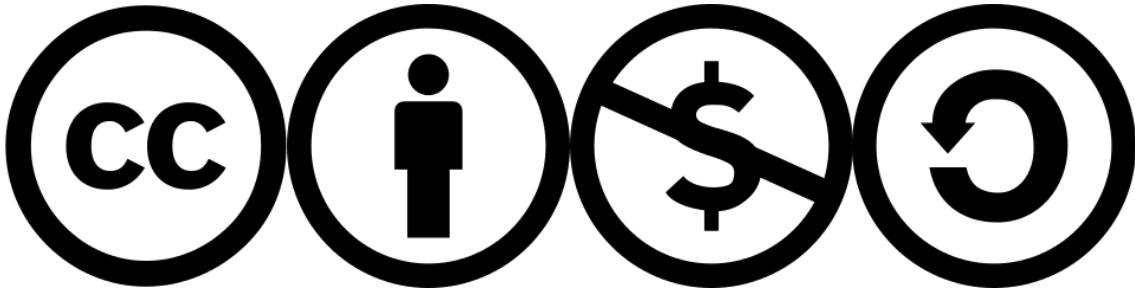


The President's Tailored Suit: A Political Fable

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Note

*The following is a reimagining of
Hans Christian Andersen's
[The Emperor's New Clothes](#).*

*Creative license has been taken to
adapt the moral of the story into the
context of early 21st century American
culture. Any inaccuracies of historical
details are solely that of the writer.*

Once upon a time, there was a President of an [illiberal democracy](#), who lived in a grand mansion. Every day, she busied himself with all manner of tasks, such as meeting with very important people, who always wanted some money from her, but the President was hard pressed to give everyone precisely what they asked. At the end of her first month in office, the President noticed that her off-the-rack business suit was nearly worn through.

“Oh, my,” exclaimed the President, “My suit is unsuitable for my roles as the Chief Diplomat, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and as the Chief Appointer of Bureaucrats. If my appearance is less than fashionable, everybody else in the government will think I am awfully shabby and drab! What am I to do?”

Slumping behind her [Oval Office desk](#), the President was nearly despondent when, suddenly, there appeared the Federal Reserve Chairman. As it turned out, the Chairman was an accomplished tailor, and still weaved cloth as a relaxing hobby. Seeing the plight of the President, the Chairman said, “Mrs. President, I would like to propose a solution to your vexing troubles. If I were to weave you a tailored suit of legal tender, then I think your constituents would be pleased not only with your appearance, but also with your ability to provide for the general welfare.”

The President considered the Chairman’s proposal, and understood that such a suit of paper notes would be to hit two birds with one stone. “Weave me this suit at once, Chairman, and in return, I will make thee Ambassador to China!” As the Chairman tingled at the prospect of instigating a currency war, he composed himself by responding, “Mrs. President, serving you is a reward unto itself,” before disappearing from the Oval Office in a cloud of mist.

And so, the Chairman met with the rest of his mighty Committee on how to best generate such legal tender for the Presidential suit he was to craft. They eventually reached a consensus that the only viable way to do so, *without* emptying the Treasury all at once, was to increase the amount of loans they made to the government. This way, the Committee would be able

to generate enough paper notes for the Chairman to weave into a tailored suit for the President.

Once this had been done, the Chairman plopped into his lounge chair and took a nap. Most of the paper notes used in this [banana republic](#) aren't actually made of paper, but rather, nothing more than electronic pulses dissipating into the thin air. Crafting a suit from this lack of tangible material, much less a *tailored* one for the President, would need quite a bit of imagination on the part of everyone involved.

A week passed, and the President became anxious about when her tailored suit would be ready for her to wear. She ordered her head lackey, the Vice President, to check on the status of the Chairman's work. Upon arrival at the workshop, the Vice President was aghast to see the Chairman napping!

Upset, the Vice President roused the Chairman. "What impudence you must have, Chairman, to think you can weave the President a newly tailored suit without using your hands!" The Chairman, bleary-eyed, suddenly realized the nature of the Vice President's anger, and began to soothe him. "Mr. Vice President, I fear you misunderstand the nature of my work; only those who blindly obey [the State](#) are able to see the majestic qualities of the President's tailored suit."

Realizing the significance of the Chairman's work, the Vice President sheepishly apologized for his rash anger. He did not want to seem disloyal to his President, so the Vice President responded, "Mr. Chairman, your tailored suit is rather exquisite; methinks the President will be quite pleased once you are finished." The Chairman proceeded to tell the Vice President various details of the tailored suit, so that he may update the President about its current status.

Upon returning to the White House, the Vice President proceeded to tell the President all about the magnificence of her tailored suit. Quite pleased with this development, the President acquiesced to the Chairman that he may generate whatever he needs in order to finish her suit. So, the Chairman's Committee made even more loans to the government so there would be an abundant supply of paper notes to weave into a suit.

Rumors began circulating about the Chairman's work, and the President became even more anxious to see the suit for herself. Arriving at his workshop with the entire White House press corps in tow, the President demanded the Chairman to show her the suit. He told her the same thing he told the Vice President, and subsequently, the President did the same thing as her head lackey did by admiring the purely invisible suit. As can be expected, the press corps asked the Chairman all sorts of questions about various details of the suit, to which the Chairman responded by giving rather vague answers. All things considered, this press conference was nothing out of the ordinary.

Soon, the President's tailored suit was finished, and just in time for the annual White House [state dinner](#). This particular state dinner was also unique in that it was going to be the very first [live-streamed](#) one of the entire event. The President was feeling quite confident wearing her newly tailored suit of paper money, so that the foreign delegation could simply pluck whatever amounts of money they desired from her.

That evening, the whole country was watching the President, adorned in her tailored suit, greet the Chinese diplomats, who complimented her profusely, for they had seen the earlier press conference, and fearing that their loyalty to their own government might be questioned, they convinced themselves that the Chairman's handiwork was marvelous. Course after sumptuous course of gourmet cuisine was served at the state dinner, a [string quartet](#) played lovely classical music, and the sound of clinking champagne glasses filled the air. Nothing could go wrong, or so they all thought.

As the President ascended the podium in order to give her speech for this annual state dinner, she kept telling herself how she had become a success by having others revere her. At the podium, the President clicked her heels together, extended her right arm forward, and exclaimed, "[Gott schütze Amerika!](#)" Much applause followed, and the adoration she received bolstered her confidence something fierce; she felt that she was on top of the world, and that nothing was going to take that away from her.

Ending her speech about the importance of diplomacy to peace, she proclaimed, "[L'état c'est moi!](#)" to the standing ovation

from the attendees. Uniquely, in order to seem magnanimous, the President took a few questions from the audience. The first question was how quickly would the trade deficit be reduced, and the President quickly replied that projections are not available yet, but that tonight is a celebration of cooperation between our two peoples. Interestingly, the last question came from the Russian ambassador's young son who blurted out, "Mrs. President, ma'am, why are you naked?"

The child's impertinent question shocked the Chinese dignitaries, except one, who remarked, "The boy can see the truth when others are willfully blind to it, and I'll add that the President is much finer than the ladies of the night in [Dashilar!](#)" Stunned, the President's senses came back to her, but now she must endure her shame as gracefully as possible. Descending from the podium, she couldn't shake the nagging feeling that all of this had been a sham, given that she allowed herself to perpetuate the most dangerous superstition.