

## 'Dr. Doom' squares off against other economists in Intelligence Squared Debate

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by Stephanie Lin

Is big government stifling the American spirit?

That was the question posed to panelists at last night's Intelligence Squared debate in the Skirball Center.

Among the guests was Stern professor Nouriel Roubini, who was nicknamed "Dr. Doom" by The New York Times after he successfully predicted the financial crisis as early as September 2006. Along with Laura Tyson, an economic adviser to President Obama, Roubini said big government is not harmful — and, in fact, that more could be done.

"If the American spirit is stifled today, it's because this is not a mental recession," Roubini said. "This is a real recession. This is the worst recession we have had since the Great Depression."

He added: "We have to start stimulating the man for labor and for work. That is what we need to do."

Tyson also spoke about the absolute need for government involvement in a time of crisis.

"When you have a major financial crisis and a recession [that] follows, the government has to help out clean up the mess," she said. "The government has to supply capital to the financial institutions. The government has to deal with the slowdown of our economy, the recession, the loss of jobs and the bankruptcy."

On the other side of the debate were former U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm, now the vice chairman of UBS Investment Bank, and Arthur Laffer, who was an economic adviser to President Ronald Reagan.

"It is generally accepted that limited government is the key to freedom and freedom is the key to unleashing human potential," Gramm said. "Freedom has allowed ordinary people to do extraordinary things."

Prior to the event, audience members were polled for their opinions on the motion in question. Twenty percent were for the motion, 44 percent were against it, and 36 were undecided.

But another poll after the debate resulted in 49 percent for the motion, while 43 percent were still against it. Eight percent still remained undecided.

LSP freshman Priscilla Abraham said the debate only reaffirmed her belief in limited government.

"I was always against big government and still am," she said.