

I'LL TAKE MIDDLE CLASS "POCKETS OF PROSPERITY" FOR \$250,000, PLEASE

Yesterday, Mitt's advisor said that the campaign press corps lived in "pockets of prosperity" that prevented them from understanding the realities of the harsh economy.

The adviser, granted anonymity to criticize a press corps the campaign still relies on every day, went on to blame a "green room, green zone kind of divide," saying the national press, most of whom live in New York or DC, "pockets of prosperity," are isolated from the realities of the harsh economy – and therefore, unable to grasp Romney's message.

He had a point, if you ignore that press corps' bubbles are nowhere as exclusive as Mitt's bubble.

Except that one of those members of the press corps—undeniably a resident of the DC bubble insulated from the realities of the harsh economy—just caught Mitt treating people making between \$100,000 and \$250,000 a year (as well as those below it) as middle class.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: You know Democrats are going to be wanting to get much more detail from you on how you're going to pay for your tax cuts. We've heard that at the Democratic Convention. President Clinton said your math doesn't work. I know you dispute what President Clinton said and what the Democrats that say that you're going to have a \$2,000 tax hike on middleclass families. I know you dispute that. You cite your own studies. But one of the studies you cite

by Martin Feldstein at Harvard shows that to make your math work, it could work, if you eliminate the home mortgage, charity, and state and local tax deductions for everyone earning over \$100,000. Is that what you propose?

MITT ROMNEY: No, that's not what I propose. And, of course, part of my plan is to stimulate economic growth. The biggest source of getting the country to a balanced budget is not by raising taxes or by cutting spending. It's by encouraging the growth of the economy. So my tax plan is to encourage investment in growth in America, more jobs, that means more people paying taxes. So that's a big component of what allows us to get to a balanced budget.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: But his study, which you've cited, says it can only work if you take away those deductions for everyone earning more than \$100,000.

MITT ROMNEY: Well, it doesn't necessarily show the same growth that we're anticipating. And I haven't seen his precise study. But I can tell you that we can lower our rates—

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Well, you cited the study, though.

MITT ROMNEY: Well, I said that there are five different studies that point out that we can get to a balanced budget without raising taxes on middle income people. Let me tell you, George, the fundamentals of my tax policy are these. Number one, reduce tax burdens on middle-income people. So no one can say my plan is going to raise taxes on middle-income people, because principle number one is keep the burden down on middle-income taxpayers.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Is \$100,000 middle income?

MITT ROMNEY: No, middle income is \$200,000 to \$250,000 and less. [my emphasis]

To be fair, this is the same kind of myth Obama propagates when protecting just those under \$250,000 from higher taxes. And the quote seems to suggest that Mitt considers both those in the \$200-250K as well as those below it as middle class.

Still, anyone who considers those making \$250,000 a year middle class must be in a pocket of prosperity.