

## [IMF: "Don't balance budgets?steal wealth!"](#) [1]

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[A disturbing Forbes piece](#) [3] reporting the latest IMF thinking. Which, shockingly, is that a) governments are so broke that even if they confiscated all the wealth of the richest 1% they'd still be broke; which means that b) they're going to come after everyone else's savings and pensions too; and c) that even then, governments won't be able to live within their means; so d) it will come down to all of the above, with debt defaults and inflation making up the difference.

As the Forbes piece says, the idea of governments living within their means, or getting their Ponzi-scheme pension and welfare systems under control, doesn't feature in the IMF thinking. It is more concerned about how to tax people who try to shift their wealth out of the grasp of the overspending politicians: "taxing different forms of wealth differently according to their mobility," as the Fund puts it, "...to make it harder for the very well-off to evade taxation by placing funds elsewhere."

Farewell, then, to the tax competition that might pressure governments to provide good value for their taxpayers' money. And farewell to the fiscal probity ? the notion of governments living within their means ? that the IMF once stressed. Instead, it seems that even the world's bank manager reckons it's OK for politicians to spend profligately and then steal the wealth of their citizens to pay the bill.

Which just shows you how deep the rot has penetrated. But at the same time, as I read all this, I get the strange feeling that Atlas is beginning to shrug.

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