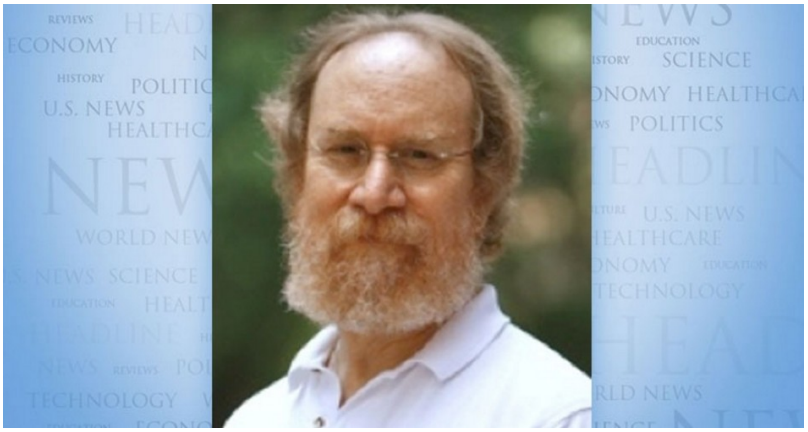
Written by **Sheldon Richman** on October 26, 2012

Americans Should Reject Obama-Romney Foreign Policy



If we needed evidence of the impoverishment of American politics, the so-called debate between President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney gave us all we could ask for.

We normally expect a debate to highlight some disagreement, but in American politics disagreement is reserved for minor matters. The two parties — actually the two divisions of the uniparty that represents the permanent regime — agree on all fundamentals. If you need proof, observe how the establishment media treated Ron Paul, who challenged the permanent regime's basic premises on foreign policy, civil liberties, and monetary control. He dug too deep.

It's been noted, mostly by humorists, that Romney continuously expressed his agreement with Obama across a range of issues: drone warfare, Iran, Afghanistan, even Iraq. He tried to manufacture differences by suggesting that he would have done more sooner. But this all sounded flaccid; Romney seemed desperate to draw some contrast with a foreign policy that he embraces.

What does Romney really believe? Who can say? What we do know is that he's taking his foreign-policy advice from a team of neoconservatives, formerly of the George W. Bush administration, who helped dig the hole the country is in.

Obama, for his part, defended his record, which someone other than Romney could have torn to shreds. Obama brags about ending the occupation of Iraq, yet he forgets that Bush had already signed an agreement, insisted on by the Iran-friendly Iraqi

government, to get out by the end of 2011. What Obama won't tell you is that he begged Prime Minister Maliki to ask U.S. troops to remain. Thankfully, Maliki said no.

Obama of course also mentioned the killing of Osama bin Laden. Two things about that: First, capture and trial would have been a better example for the world than summary execution by Navy SEALs. Second, the enfeebled bin Laden was a has-been by May 2011, having been kicked upstairs when he started devising impossible "plots." He was no threat to the American people.

Someone other than Romney might have pointed out that Obama's policy has helped to spread al-Qaeda's influence beyond Afghanistan and Iraq. Thanks to the president's drone warfare — which regularly murders innocents — and other interventions, there are now al-Qaeda affiliates or sympathizers in Libya, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Mali, and elsewhere.

But Romney can't point this out, because he approves of Obama's imperialist policy and drone warfare. He apparently can't wait until he, like Obama, gets to personally choose targets from a presidential kill list.

And then there's Iran. At the debate, Romney lauded Obama's "crippling sanctions" on the Iranian economy. But there is no such thing as an "economy." There are only people engaged in buying and selling.

Obama and Romney both say that war against Iran should be a last resort. But if that is the case, why do they dehumanize the people of Iran? Sanctions don't cripple the Iranian economy. Sanctions cripple people — economically, nutritionally, and in every other respect. They make life hell for

average people, especially children and the elderly. The rulers suffer least of all.

Both candidates take it for granted that Iran is working toward a nuclear bomb, and that when it gets one, the American and Israeli people will be at risk. How many times did Romney say that the country is "four years closer" to a bomb? Of course, the "debate" moderator, Bob Schieffer of CBS, never challenged that premise. Like all good network stenographers, he lets his questions propagandize on behalf of the permanent regime.

There are two problems with all of this: According to American and Israeli intelligence, there is no evidence Iran wants a bomb. Furthermore, even if Iran got one, all it would be good for is deterrence against continuing U.S. and Israeli domination of the Middle East. No one seriously thinks the Iranian regime is suicidal. America has thousands of nukes; Israel has hundreds. So what good would a warhead or two do Iran, even if it was intent on becoming a nuclear power?

Obama and Romney are both conceited enough to think a U.S. president can and should orchestrate events in the Muslim world. That alone is reason enough to reject them both.

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