



The Republican Debate: A Learning Seminar or Indoor Sport

The Republican debate, that took place in Orlando's packed convention center on September 22nd, came across to this viewer as the newest form of indoor sports rather than a serious political seminar. The verbal tennis match between Gov. Perry of Texas and ex-Governor of Massachusetts Mitt Romney took center stage during the two-hour event. It was a matter of scoring points rather than enlightening the public. It was very entertaining stuff, but not much else.



The problem with Perry is that he seems somewhat erratic and inconsistent in his conservatism, while Romney represents Republican stability and looks quite presidential. He is clearly a big government Republican who will make liberal programs more efficient. He doesn't have a revolutionary bone in his body. What he promises to bring to the presidency is "fiscal responsibility." He will maintain Social Security as a successful program that should be available to all Americans in the future. I doubt that he would even consider privatization of the system as was done in Chile, which Herman Cain talked about.

When Romney was asked whether he considered Obama to be a socialist, he said he considered Obama to be a big-spending liberal. They will love him at the Council on Foreign Relations, and he will fit in very nicely with the crowd at a Bilderberg conference. In fact, he is the most politically correct candidate among the Republicans.

If we look at the candidates on whether or not they *look* presidential, Romney wins the contest. Huntsman looks presidential. Gingrich, Gary Johnson, and Herman Cain pass muster. Santorum looks too young and wet behind the ears. Bachmann, as a woman, does not look experienced and mature like a Margaret Thatcher. Ron Paul, while being the kind of revolutionary we need in the White House, unfortunately does not look presidential. So, in this political beauty contest, Romney comes out ahead of the pack.

As expected, Barack Obama took quite a beating. Former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson's quip that his neighbor's two dogs have created more shovel ready jobs than Obama's program brought the house down. Herman Cain scored a point when he criticized Romney's plan to revitalize the economy. "That dog won't hunt," he said to great applause.



Written by [Sam Blumenfeld](#) on September 23, 2011

Each candidate had his or her moment. Rick Santorum stated that public employees should not be unionized. He also said we must stay in Iraq and Afghanistan until their governments are stable enough to take over their defense. Ron Paul said that he would veto any bill that violated the Tenth Amendment. Bachmann stressed the need to get the federal government out of education. Herman Cain told us of his battle with cancer and that if Obamacare had been implemented, he'd be dead. He was able to get adequate medical treatment that saved his life because it was all immediately available. A bureaucrat in Washington would have made him wait for treatment, which would have been fatal.

Romney is the only one who did not advocate repealing Obamacare. He said he would give all states waivers. Bachmann criticized him for that, saying that she wanted to get rid of Obamacare in no uncertain terms. And all of the others also want to repeal Obamacare. Romney's emphasis on waivers reflects his reluctance to totally repeal a liberal program. He'll want to make it better. Clearly his mindset is as far from that of the Tea Party movement as can be.

Virtually all agreed that the federal government ought to get out of education, that education should be a local concern. But we doubt that Romney will abolish the Department of Education. He said nice things about Arne Duncan, Obama's Secretary of Education, and the Race to the Top program. Anyone who thinks that Race to the Top is a good idea should never be president.

In other words, Romney cannot be trusted by conservatives. He represents the kind of Republicanism that contributed to growth of government by accepting all new liberal programs.

Will he win the nomination? Much depends on what happens in the months ahead. Sarah Palin is still waiting in the wings to see what the Tea Party will do to get its delegates to the Republican convention. Romney is counting on the Republican establishment controlling the convention. But if the Tea Party revolutionaries take over, everything will change.

As for the debate being a learning seminar for the public, they could see that virtually all the candidates thought it was not a good idea to raise taxes in a recession. For the first time, "socialist" was the word used to describe Obama. All agreed that the only way to create jobs was to grow the economy. And all agreed that the federal government was too big and had to be cut down to size. Most people in a survey about which federal departments to abolish chose the Department of Education.

As for foreign policy, most of the candidates emphasized the need to support Israel in its ongoing struggle against Islamic terrorism and the move by the Palestinians to get the UN to declare the West Bank a Palestinian state.

All in all, the debate served its purpose. It gave the public a good opportunity to look at each of the candidates, listen to their views, and size them up. They all emphasized the need for America to once more become the economically pre-eminent nation on the globe, spreading the ideology of individual freedom to peoples everywhere. That's what most Americans want.



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