



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on October 19, 2011

Debate: Republicans Agree to Continue Foreign Aid Funding (Except Ron Paul)

Asked where he stood on continuing foreign aid, former Godfather's Pizza CEO Herman Cain responded that "we ought to continue to give foreign aid to our friends like Israel." Minnesota Congressman Michele Bachmann also agreed that foreign aid should be continued: "No, we should not be cutting foreign aid to Israel. Israel is our greatest ally." Frontrunner Mitt Romney acknowledged that "we're spending more on foreign aid than we ought to be spending," but he refused to call for an end to foreign aid. Texas Governor Rick Perry also declined to call for a complete end to foreign aid, though he offered that "I think it's time to have a very serious debate about defunding the United Nations."



Only Rep. Paul said the nation can no longer afford to borrow money with deficits in order to give taxpayers' money away. "Foreign aid, it should be the easiest thing to cut. It's not authorized in the Constitution," Paul countered. "To me, foreign aid is taking money from poor people in this country and giving it to rich people in poor countries." Paul proposed a [budget plan](#) this week that would zero out foreign aid in year one, and cut a total of nearly \$1 trillion in the first year of his presidency. The budget proposal would eliminate five cabinet-level agencies and balance the federal budget within three years without raising taxes.

CNN's Anderson Cooper also asked Paul about his budget plan, which would cut 15 percent in military spending the first year of his presidency: "Can you guarantee national security would not be hurt by that?"

"I think it would be enhanced. I don't want to cut any defense," Paul replied. "There is a lot of money spent in the military budget that doesn't do any good for our defense. How does it help us to keep troops in Korea all these years? We're broke. We have to borrow this money. Why are we in Japan? Why do we subsidize Germany?"

Other Republicans were far less willing to make cuts in the military budget. "I would absolutely not cut one penny out of military spending," Rick Santorum told Anderson Cooper, the debate moderator. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich also criticized automatic military cuts that would take place if the "supercommittee" of Congress could not agree upon other spending cuts before the end of the year. "The fact is to say I'm going to put the security of the United States up against some arbitrary budget number is suicidally stupid," Gingrich quipped. Gingrich did not make a categorical statement against defense spending cuts, as Santorum did, stressing that "I'm a hawk, but I'm a cheap hawk."

Calling a lack of willingness to make at least some cuts in military spending "economic suicide," Paul



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stated: “We have enough weapons to blow up the world about 20, 25 times. We have more weapons than all the other countries put together essentially. And we want to spend more and more, and you can’t cut a penny? I mean, this is why we are at an impasse.” Rep. Paul then challenged his opponents to come up with some genuine spending cuts: “I want to hear somebody up here willing to cut something, something real. This budget is in bad shape, and the financial calamity is going to be much worse than anybody ever invading this country.”

Among Ron Paul’s opponents, only Mitt Romney offered up any specific spending cut proposals. And even those were timid: “Congressman Paul asked where there was a place where we can cut the budget. Let me tell you where to cut the budget. Discretionary accounts you bring back to 2008 levels. We get rid of Obamacare. Number three, we take Medicaid, turn it back to the states and grow it at only one to two percent per year. Number four, we cut federal employment by at least 10 percent through attrition. And finally, we say to federal employees, you’re not going to make more money than the people in the private sector who are paying for you. We link their compensation.” Most of Romney’s spending “cuts” are actually not real dollar cuts, but instead reductions on planned increases in federal spending and would not balance the federal budget in any number of years.

Congressman Paul introduced himself in the debate this way: “I’m Congressman Ron Paul from Texas, I’m the champion of liberty. I’m the only one who has offered a balanced budget.” While his opponents may challenge the fact that he is the “champion of liberty,” they certainly can’t challenge the fact that he’s the only one who has actually drawn up a plan to balance the budget or that he’s proposed more specific spending cuts than all of his rivals put together.

Paul warned at the debate audience that the debt crisis in Europe is being imitated by American policy-makers, and predicted dire consequences if a drastic change in course is not made. “This debt bubble is the thing you ought to really worry about, because it’s imploding on us right now. It’s worldwide. We are no more removed from this than the man on the moon. It’s going to get much worse.” While dire predictions can often be safely ignored by some economic analysts and most politicians Ron Paul was one of the few to [accurately predict and diagnose](#) the housing and financial crisis years before it happened.

Photo of Ron Paul: AP Images



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