

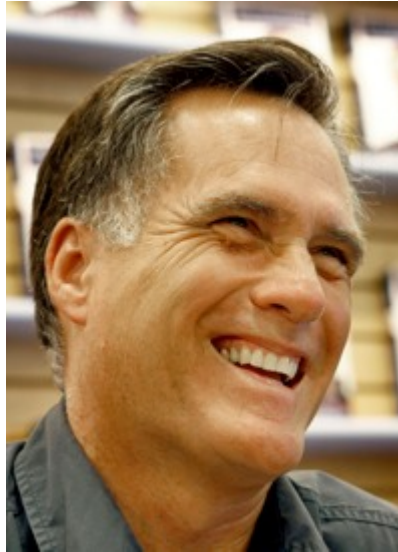


Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 12, 2012

Mitt Romney Loves Europe, and Europe Loves Him Back

Of course, sour grapes might account for Gingrich's charges, but regardless of the motivation behind these accusations, it behooves Republicans to analyze the allegations and see if there is any truth behind the bitterness.

There's a lot about Mitt Romney that doesn't appeal to advocates of limited government within the GOP. He is the man who signed the individual mandate into law, he's wishy-washy on his commitment to reform Social Security, and he's a champion of ethanol subsidies. These are not the hallmarks of a candidate keen on attracting conservatives, true constitutional conservatives.



Regardless of his policy positions and his record as Governor, Mitt Romney is winning. Perhaps there is a prevalent spirit among Republican voters that anybody would be better than President Obama. That theory might be based on the correct premise that President Obama is systematically usurping powers not given him by the Constitution and then employing those unlawfully gotten powers to convert the United States of America into a socialist democracy based on the European model. In that case, Mitt Romney is no different from Barack Obama.

Witness an interview given by Romney to the *Wall Street Journal* in which he admitted that he is not willing to take the imposition of a European-style value-added tax (VAT) off the table of options for kick-starting America's economic recovery.

The *Wall Street Journal* reports:

He [Mitt Romney] says he doesn't "like the idea" of layering a VAT onto the current income tax system. But he adds that, philosophically speaking, a VAT might work as a replacement for some part of the tax code, "particularly at the corporate level," as Paul Ryan proposed several years ago. What he doesn't do is rule a VAT out.

Most Americans are unfamiliar with how a VAT works. Basically, it is a form of national sales tax that is imposed at every stage of the production process of a good or service. That is to say, the object or service in question is taxed again at every stage where value is added. In Europe, not only are taxes aggregated to the "value," but so is the size of the government and the scope of its oversight into the manufacturing, marketing, and selling of everything.

For the sake of comparison, one should look at what Mitt Romney's potential rival in the race for the White House has said about the VAT. President Barack Obama said that the value-added tax was "something that has worked for other countries." Is the President referring to Greece or Portugal or Italy?

So there is little if any difference between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney with regard to their fascination for the European method of aggregating tax upon tax to everything bought and sold. What



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about the likelihood, however, of passage of a VAT bill under a President Obama and a President Romney. One observer reckons that a VAT is less likely to be imposed by Barack Obama than Mitt Romney. Here's why:

It's unlikely that the president [Barack Obama] would propose a VAT, in large part because he is fixated on class-warfare tax hikes. If he did, almost every Republican in Congress would be opposed, even if only for partisan reasons. But what if a VAT sympathizer like Mr. Romney wins next November and decides that his plan for a lower corporate tax rate is only possible if accompanied by a VAT? There will be quite a few Republicans who like that idea because they want to do something nice for their lobbyist friends in the business community. And there will be many Democrats drawn to the plan because they realize that they need this new source of revenue to enable bigger government.

The value-added tax isn't the only European policy that has been spoken kindly of by Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney.

In an interview with the *Concord Monitor* published just before Christmas, the newspaper reported:

There are policies of European nations that could be worth considering in the United States. Switzerland, he [Romney] said, has a health care model where people pay about 20 percent of their medical bills, giving them an incentive to consider cost when making medical decisions. "I'm not going to adopt a Swiss health care system, but the power of incentives in a co-insurance model that the Swiss have is something states might want to look at," he said. "So there are many things, in addition to good food, that we can learn from our European friends. But what I don't want is to adopt a strategy of ever-shrinking government support of the military and ever-increasing support for government programs."

Romney carried on with the pro-Swiss co-insurance healthcare theme later at a town hall meeting in Littleton, New Hampshire. At the event, Romney said he'd "like to see us open doors for something like coinsurance, not copay, coinsurance and try some of these ideas on a state by state level."

With all the love Mitt Romney is showing our continental cousins, one wonders whether such devotion is going unrequited. No way.

Media across Europe seems excited about the prospect of a President Romney. Ironically, their fawning over Romney is motivated mostly by their perception (correct, it seems) that Romney is not a conservative and that his success is revealing a rift in the Republican Party.

An article in *The Atlantic* chronicles the discussion of Romney's candidacy in the European dailies:

"The Iowa presidential primaries reveal deep divisions among the Republicans," proclaims German paper *Die Welt*. An opinion in French *Le Monde* riffs on "Mitt Romney and the fatwas of the Republican Party." *Libération* describes the "Christian right" as "torn," while Spanish *El País* suggests Obama may be "tak[ing] advantage" of the Republican divide.

Thus far, European media voices have also expressed a strong preference for Romney over the other contenders. Clemens Wergin, for example, writes for *Die Welt* that the results in Iowa "show how uncertain the conservative movement in America is of its own identity." Mitt Romney represents the "classic, pragmatic, business-oriented branch." Then there's the "Christian, archconservative" side represented by Rick Santorum. Ron Paul "stands for the anti-state, radical libertarian impulses of America and for many populist reflexes. At the same time he's the candidate from whom there is the most to fear."

If that wasn't clear enough, how about this summary: "The good news from Iowa is that in this highly



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social conservative and less diverse state the moderate Romney can still win.”

As voters in South Carolina prepare to choose from among the several Republicans vying for their support in their campaign for the presidency, they can follow the Europeans’ advice and select the “pragmatic, business-oriented” side that brought us TARP and bailouts or they can reject Europe and choose the side that gave us the Constitution and a limited government and unlimited liberty that is the envy of the world.

Photo of Mitt Romney: AP Images



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