



Romney Foreign Policy Speech Promises Bigger Government and New Wars

As conservative journalists and television pundits praise Mitt Romney for “hammering” President Obama during his [foreign policy speech Monday at the Virginia Military Institute](#), a closer reading reveals very little difference between the two major party candidates on issue that are important to constitutionalists.



In fact, going by the content of his address, a Romney presidency would see the continued growth of government and the expansion of the U.S. military’s role as international regime topplers. Neither prospect, of course, should please those looking for an alternative to the status quo and a return to the limited government and non-interventionist policy preferred by our founding fathers.

One of the most morally and monetarily destructive elements of the current administration’s foreign policy is the perpetuation of the preemptive war program initiated by the last Republican president, George W. Bush.

Since he was inaugurated on January 20, 2009, President Barack Obama not only continued combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but expanded the role of American “warfighters” in Libya, Egypt, Pakistan, and Yemen.

At *The New American*, we have dutifully chronicled the use of drones to search and destroy suspected militants in Pakistan and Yemen. Of course, at least three of the victims of the president’s death-by-drone program have been American citizens — including a 15-year-old boy.

Would President Romney immediately burn his would-be predecessor’s kill list and insist that Leon Panetta, head of the CIA, do the same with his? Here’s what Romney said about the drone war during his first major foreign policy address:

But Al-Qaeda remains a strong force in Yemen and Somalia, in Libya and other parts of North Africa, in Iraq, and now in Syria. And other extremists have gained ground across the region. Drones and the modern instruments of war are important tools in our fight, but they are no substitute for a national security strategy for the Middle East.

In fact, in response to a question about Pakistan posed to him during a primary debate, [Romney said that drones were an effective tool](#) for destroying the radical element in Pakistan and that as president, he “would continue doing that.”

The “hold your nose and vote” bloc in the Romney camp, particularly those who prefer a more peaceful



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on October 10, 2012

approach to diplomacy, won't be well pleased by that promise.

In fairness, it wouldn't take much to be less provocative than the current administration. As we have reported, [President Obama takes little interest in the counting of casualties](#) caused by the Hellfire missiles fired at suspected militants — or at those attending the funerals of those already killed.

Admittedly, there are many conservative voters who are almost persuaded to vote for Mitt Romney rather than cast a vote for a third party thinking that such would be a “wasted vote.” The problem in that equation is that based on ample evidence there would be little realpolitik difference between a President Romney and President Obama.

For example, in his VMI speech, Romney criticized President Obama for withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq.

“In Iraq, the costly gains made by our troops are being eroded by rising violence, a resurgent Al-Qaeda, the weakening of democracy in Baghdad, and the rising influence of Iran. And yet, America's ability to influence events for the better in Iraq has been undermined by the abrupt withdrawal of our entire troop presence,” Romney said.

Mitt Romney thinks the combat operations in Iraq ended too soon. How long would he have continued sacrificing the blood of American soldiers on the altar of “democracy in Baghdad?”

More importantly, how would this position inform the path Romney would pursue with regard to Afghanistan? Would the number of American casualties multiply year after year as the “commander-in-chief” seeks to strengthen “democracy?” And, where would this moveable massacre move to next? Iran? Syria? When would the sacrifice be sufficient?

Not surprisingly, Romney did not directly answer this question. He did, however, hint that the military-industrial complex — currently crippling our economy and our reputation — would roll on into new markets in Iran and elsewhere. Said Romney:

Iran today has never been closer to a nuclear weapons capability. It has never posed a greater danger to our friends, our allies, and to us. And it has never acted less deterred by America, as was made clear last year when Iranian agents plotted to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador in our nation's capital. And yet, when millions of Iranians took to the streets in June of 2009, when they demanded freedom from a cruel regime that threatens the world, when they cried out, “Are you with us, or are you with them?” — the American President was silent.

Across the greater Middle East, as the joy born from the downfall of dictators has given way to the painstaking work of building capable security forces, and growing economies, and developing democratic institutions, the President has failed to offer the tangible support that our partners want and need.

And, regarding Syria:

In Syria, I will work with our partners to identify and organize those members of the opposition who share our values and ensure they obtain the arms they need to defeat Assad's tanks, helicopters, and fighter jets. Iran is sending arms to Assad because they know his downfall would be a strategic defeat for them. We should be working no less vigorously with our international partners to support the many Syrians who would deliver that defeat to Iran — rather than sitting on the sidelines. It is essential that we develop influence with those forces in Syria that will one day lead a country that sits at the heart of the Middle East.



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This seems like nothing less than a promise to provide the Syrian opposition (led by many veteran al-Qaeda operatives) with material support equal to that he claims Iran is sending to arm the Assad government.

This is all very good news to the [large defense contractors who are donating money to both presidential campaigns](#). One might say they are playing both ends against the middle — class.

Is it possible that Romney directed these remarks at his Pentagon patrons as a way of telegraphing his commitment to creating new and lucrative markets for the materiel they crank out?

Some may find Romney's revelations startling, especially those leaning toward voting for him in November under the notion that he is a preferable alternative to Barack Obama. To the observant, however, Romney's promise to keep grinding the neocon chicken hawk music box was hinted at when he selected his advisors.

In [an informative article published in September](#), Warren Mass of *The New American* reported the roster of Romney's core cadre of foreign policy counselors. Among this group were found several neocon leading lights (Bill Kristol, Robert Kagan, and John Bolton), as well as over a dozen members of the influential globalist policy pushers, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR).

Romney's motivation for showing the foreign policy cards in his hand is unclear. It is unusual in fact for a candidate to be quite this thorough in his pre-election pronouncements, particularly when such remarks will be shredded into fodder for the cannon of his opponent's campaign arsenal.

It seems that [Ockham's Razor](#) may cut away the confusion. William of Ockham, a 14th-century philosopher, stated that when deciding among competing explanations for something, the simplest is usually correct.

In other words, Mitt Romney likely decided to promise to grow the government and widen the wars because he truly believes those are the right things to do — regardless of fundamental principles of constitutional liberty to the contrary.

Correction: Leon Panetta is the secretary of defense, not the director of the CIA. He was head of the CIA prior to becoming the secretary of defense. Thanks to our reader who spotted the error.

Photo: Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney arrives to deliver a foreign policy speech at Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in Lexington, Va., Oct. 8,

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