



Written by [Steve Bonta](#) on May 17, 2024

Senator Mitt Romney Ridicules the Phrase “America First,” Urges Focus on Climate, Russia, and China

Senator Mitt Romney (R-Utah) finds the phrase “America First” laughable. In an [interview](#) with MSNBC’s Stephanie Ruhle, Romney expressed his strong dislike of populism and his support of the interventionist approach to foreign policy embraced by American political elites since World War 2:

Many in our party have followed that populist streak, which is, ‘Hey, stop worrying about the rest of the world, just worry about what’s going on here.’ What they’re forgetting is that we are connected to the rest of the world, that our economy is connected to the rest of the world. That if we had had that attitude then, you know, Germany would’ve ended up ruling the world, all right.



AP Images
Mitt Romney

After adding that he “laugh[s] at the phrase ‘America First,’” he accused America Firsters of isolationism, and predicted that such a posture would allow Putin to march unimpeded across Europe, and China to continue her own rise to hegemonic status. “How about a world where China and Russia control the world and we have our own little island? That’s not a world where Americans are going to be safe or prosperous,” Romney told Ruhle. “We’re safe and prosperous when the world follows the orders that have existed over the last 75 years.”

Elsewhere in the interview, Romney was careful to differentiate between what voters want, and what politicians ought to be delivering:

I would note ... that a lot of politicians spend their time talking about things that sound good to the folks back home, but have no impact on the future of the country.... But the big things that we ought to be dealing with: One, the amount of debt we have — it’s getting to be a problem, all right? Number two, the emergence of China as a great power, if not THE great power. Three, the climate. We talk about things that make us feel good about ourselves, but won’t actually deal with the climate. And the big one: artificial intelligence. AI is changing the world. It’s as big a disruptor as nuclear power was.

Romney also called for a return to bipartisanship:

There are a lot of people who don’t want anything to become law.... I know it’s nice to go



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back home and fire up the base and get everybody to say, “he’s a real fighter,” but if that fighter is not willing to actually work with people across the aisle, that fighter’s not gonna get anything done. And there are too many people today who don’t recognize we need to do some things right now.

Voter sentiment, however, seems to have diverged sharply from the old bipartisan “business as usual” m.o. Romney’s impending retirement would appear to be at least a tacit acknowledgement of this.



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