



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on September 13, 2011

Why Do They Hate Us? Santorum: We're Free; Paul: We're There

Newt Gingrich began the foreign policy and military-spending discussion with an alarmist and unrealistic statement that "I think we are at the edge of an enormous crisis in national security. I think that we are greatly underestimating the threat to this country. And I think the day after we celebrated the 10th anniversary of 9/11, we should be reminded exactly what is at stake if a foreign terrorist gets a nuclear weapon into this country."



Of course, only a handful of nation-states have nuclear weapons of any kind. And the ability to make easily transportable nuclear weapons is perhaps limited to the United States, Russia, and Britain. The likelihood that a terrorist would get his hands on a portable nuclear weapon is zero without the explicit help of the U.S., Russian, or British governments.

Representative Ron Paul suggested that some military spending was actually making the nation less safe. He suggested the foreign policy of bombing a half dozen foreign nations (including Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, and Libya) is causing hatred of the United States and is a motivating factor in the increasing attacks against U.S. troops abroad. Paul told the Tea Party audience:

We're under great threat because we occupy so many countries. We're in 130 countries — we have 900 bases around the world — we're going broke. The purpose of al Qaeda was to attack us, invite us over there where they can target us. And they have been doing it. They have more attacks against us and the American interests per month than occurred in all the years before 9/11. But we're there, occupying their land. And if we think we can do that and not have retaliation, we're kidding ourselves. We have to be honest with ourselves. What would we do if another country, say China, were to do what we do to all those countries over there. So I would say that a foreign policy that takes care of our national defense.... There's no authority in the Constitution to be the policeman of the world. And no nation-building. Just remember, George Bush won the presidency on that platform in the year 2000, and I still think it's a good platform.

Former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum responded to Paul thusly:

On your website, on 9/11, you had a blog post that basically blamed the United States for 9/11. On your website, yesterday. You said that it was our actions that brought about the actions of 9/11. Now, Congressman Paul, that is irresponsible. Someone who is running for the President of the United States in the Republican Party should not be parroting what Osama bin Ladin said on 9/11.



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We are not being attacked, and were not attacked because of our actions. We were attacked, as Newt talked about, because we have a civilization that is antithetical to the civilization of the jihadists. And they want to kill us because of who we are and what we stand for, and what we stand for is American exceptionalism. We stand for freedom and opportunity for everyone around the world, and I am not ashamed to do that.

The blog entry Santorum referred to was Jack Hunter's ["Learning Nothing from 9/11,"](#) which did not claim Americans were guilty of the 9/11 attacks. Rather, it quoted the head of the CIA's "Bin Ladin unit" on why bin Ladin chose to attack the United States:

Former head of the CIA's Bin Laden Unit Michael Scheuer explains what Mr. Rumsfeld still can't understand: "Our growing number of Islamist enemies are motivated to attack us because of what the U.S. government does in the Muslim world and not because of how Americans live and think here at home." Frighteningly, Rumsfeld and those of his mindset have learned nothing since 9/11 and they continue to endanger this country with their stubbornly unreflective views.

Rep. Paul responded to Santorum's opinion that "they want to kill us because of who we are and what we stand for" and that United States soldiers and sailors should continue to fight and die "for everyone around the world" this way:

As long as this country follows that idea, we are going to be under a lot of danger. This whole idea that the whole Muslim world is responsible for this and they are attacking us because we are free and prosperous, that is just not true. Osama bin Ladin and al Qaeda have been explicit. They have been explicit. And they wrote and said that we attacked America because you had bases on our holy land in Saudi Arabia, you do not give Palestinians a fair treatment, you have been bombing ... [loud audience boos] ... I didn't say that, I am trying to get you to understand what the motive was behind the bombing.... We had been bombing and killing hundreds and thousands of Iraqis for 10 years. Would you be annoyed? If you are not annoyed, then there is some problem!

Photo of Ron Paul: AP Images

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