

Who will win the White House Obama or Romney?

By

Dr. Mohsen El-Guindy

Now we are witnessing a vicious race to the American presidency between President Barak Obama and the Republican candidate Mitt Romney. Would Obama win a second term or Romney would replace him and win the race?

In order to choose between Barak Obama and Mitt Romney, one must be fair, neutral and unbiased. The present article is based on the achievements of President Obama during his four years in the White House and on the political and economic views the president and his rival Mitt Romney expressed during the debates which took place between them during the last weeks.

Who is the winner of the race to the White House? Their own words concerning political, local and foreign issues will judge between them with justice.

1- Foreign policy

a) China

Views of Mitt Romney about China

China is one of the issues that Romney appears to feel very strongly about. His comments concerning the communist nation have been intensifying over the last year, and he advocates an increasingly hard-line approach in handling China. He said, "Well, China has an interest in trade. China wants to, as they have 20 million people coming out of the farms and coming into the cities every year, they want to be able to put them to work. They want to have access to global markets. And so we have right now something they need very badly, which is access to our market and our friends around the world, have that same-- power over China. We-- to make sure that we let them

understand that in order for them to continue to have free and open access to the thing they want so badly, our markets, they have to play by the rules. They can't hack into our computer systems and steal from our government. They can't steal from corporations. They can't take patents and designs, intellectual property, and, and, and, and duplicate them, and duplicate them and counterfeit them and sell them around the world. And they also can't manipulate their currency in such a way as to make their prices well below what they otherwise would be.”

Romney also said, “We have to have China understand that like everybody else on the world stage, they have to play by the rules. And if they do, we'll have open trade with them and work with them. And they should in every way want to collaborate with us and not become a belligerent nation economically or militarily. But if you just continue to sit back and let them run over us, the policies of Barack Obama in China have allowed China to continue to expand their, their, entry into our computer systems, their entry... and, stealing our intellectual property...”

In November 12, 2011 Romney said, “Well number one, on day one, it's acknowledging something which everyone knows, they're a currency manipulator. And on that basis, we also go before the W.T.O. and bring an action against them as a currency manipulator. And that allows us to apply, selectively, tariffs where we believe they are stealing our intellectual property, hacking into our computers, or artificially lowering their prices and killing American jobs. We can't just sit back and let China run all over us. People say, "Well, you'll start a trade war." There's one going on right now, folks. They're stealing our jobs. And we're going to stand up to China.”

Romney also repeated: “When people have pursued unfair trade practices, you have to have a president that will take action. And on day one, I have indicated, day one, I will issue an executive order identifying China as a currency manipulator. We'll bring an action against them in front of the WTO for

manipulating their currency, and we will go after them. If you are not willing to stand up to China, you will get run over by China, and that's what's happened”.

Obama’s views concerning China:

Obama views China as one of the rising powers of the 21st century, and believes a more conciliatory and pragmatic approach is the key towards improving the two nation’s relationship. He made his intent clear in 2009 when he nominated the Utah Governor at the time, Jon Huntsman Jr., to become the American Ambassador of China, convinced that the Republican’s experience in the region and fluency in Mandarin made him the perfect choice for the role.

In November 14, 2009 Obama said about China when speaking at Suntory Hall in Tokyo, Japan:

“I know there are many who question how the United States perceives China's emergence. But as I have said, in an interconnected world, power does not need to be a zero-sum game, and nations need not fear the success of another. Cultivating spheres of cooperation -- not competing spheres of influence -- will lead to progress in the Asia Pacific.

Now, as with any nation, America will approach China with a focus on our interests. And it's precisely for this reason that it is important to pursue pragmatic cooperation with China on issues of mutual concern, because no one nation can meet the challenges of the 21st century alone, and the United States and China will both be better off when we are able to meet them together.”

That's why we welcome China's effort to play a greater role on the world stage -- a role in which their growing economy is joined by growing responsibility. China's partnership has proved critical in our effort to jumpstart economic recovery. China has

promoted security and stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan. And it is now committed to the global non-proliferation regime, and supporting the pursuit of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.”

So the United States does not seek to contain China, nor does a deeper relationship with China mean a weakening of our bilateral alliances. On the contrary, the rise of a strong, prosperous China can be a source of strength for the community of nations.”

And so in Beijing and beyond, we will work to deepen our strategic and economic dialogue, and improve communication between our militaries. Of course, we will not agree on every issue, and the United States will never waver in speaking up for the fundamental values that we hold dear -- and that includes respect for the religion and cultures of all people -- because support for human rights and human dignity is ingrained in America. But we can move these discussions forward in a spirit of partnership rather than rancour.”

In last week’s debate, President Barack Obama turned to Republican Mitt Romney and said, “Governor, you’re the last person who’s going to get tough on China.”

Romney’s threats, if carried out, could hit American consumers with higher prices and spark damaging tit-for-tat responses from Beijing.

The tougher-than-thou poses on China have become routine in presidential campaigns, but these threats Obama, with his ties to organized labour, was always expected to be a reluctant free trader. He’s lived up, or down, to expectations. He took forever to send trade treaties with Colombia, Panama and South Korea to Congress and he brags about Chinese imports he’s whacked with tariffs, such as tires.

In his State of the Union address earlier this year, he claimed the tire tariffs had saved more than 1,000 jobs. If so, it came at a high price: The Peterson Institute for International Economics concluded that last year, Obama's tariffs probably destroyed more than 2,500 jobs and cost U.S. consumers more than \$1 billion in higher prices. The low-end U.S. tire market simply shifted to new suppliers in Mexico and Asia.

Republicans have traditionally been more keen on opening markets, as opposed to bashing imports. But Romney, at least outwardly, sounds as if he plans to depart from that pattern. He promises to label China a currency manipulator on day one, a move that could open the door to a range of tariffs on Chinese exports — likely whacking American consumers with higher prices.

Managing American relationship with China will be one of the toughest challenges facing whoever sits in the Oval Office next year. China still runs a big surplus with the United States — about \$295 billion last year.

Beijing is increasingly playing with the nationalistic card, as is evident from its bullying behaviour in disputes with its neighbours over South China Sea island chains.

Washington has room to be more assertive with Beijing, not only in light of its antagonistic regional behaviour but over intellectual piracy, its opaque domestic markets and its export subsidies.

Such matters are best handled via filings with the World Trade Organization, which exists not only to settle such matters but diffuse the dangerous tensions often sparked by trade spats. In any case, Romney would be better advised to shift his emphasis from curbing China's exports to prying open its domestic markets (1).

In conclusion, Mitt Romney has labelled China an oppressor of human rights, a flagrant violator of intellectual property rights, an aggressive promoter of cyber espionage, and worst of all for China, a currency manipulator.

It is true that the nation's trade deficit is soaring. Manufacturers are complaining bitterly that an overvalued dollar is destroying the economy, driving businesses abroad. Congress is bubbling with proposals to punish countries that are flooding the United States with cheaper exports.

Getting tough is unlikely to deliver much. There are tools to deal with China without setting off a trade war and undermining the national interest. Many economists have suggested changing the rules of the World Trade Organization to allow retaliation against currency manipulators. The European Union would probably support such changes. Interested countries could start the process by forming a voluntary no manipulation club and get reluctant nations to join.

A multilateral approach, with tough talk in private, is also more likely to succeed against other egregious policies. President Obama may talk tough on China on the campaign trail. But his policy of engagement recognizes this. His administration's strategy of taking China's unfair practices to the World Trade Organization, where it has filed three cases since August, is likely to be more productive than unilateral action lacking the legitimacy of international law.

Trying to punish China does not fit with the American national interests. In fact, it puts at risk a central, long-term American objective: drawing China into the club of prosperous, rule-bound and democratic nations. China may not be as powerful as the United States, but it is powerful enough to hit back. As the economists Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson warn in their new book, "Why Nations Fail," China's autocratic government will end up suppressing prosperity, stifling innovation as it clings to power and breeding instability as factions fight for the spoils of growth. Helping steer China away from such an unstable, dangerous course is a core American goal.

China's economy is slowing sharply. Political turmoil is swirling just weeks before only the second peaceful transition of power in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. Loud, unilateral American toughness

at this stage is unlikely to help. It may prompt a reaction against the more outward-looking, reform-minded constituencies, strengthening conservative forces that are unwilling to cede any political control.

Even if we conclude that currency manipulation alone is causing bilateral trade deficit — a highly unlikely proposition — we can't blame it on China. "We have an Asian trade deficit," said Clyde Prestowitz, a former trade adviser to the Reagan administration. "If we were serious, we would say there are a number of countries manipulating their currency and distorting the world economy."

There are already 20 countries actively depress their currencies to bolster their exports, including Japan, Switzerland, Taiwan and Korea. Many may be following China's lead.

In the State of the Union address this year, President Obama said he had saved more than 1,000 jobs in the tire industry by imposing tariffs to stop a surge of imports from China (2).

Economy points out that Obama is doing a good job as he works hard to try to hold China accountable where China is not playing fairly. China is the second largest market in the world and an important trading partner for the United States. Based on the hostility Romney is showing to China, I express some doubts whether Romney can handle the job.

The issues Romney faces with China are outsourcing, protectionism, currency – these need to be addressed, but Romney talks about them in a China-bashing way while he needs to be richer in the substance that he's presenting to American voters." (2).

Mitt Romney is willing to punish China in order to manage American trade relationships with her, while Obama has a wiser but effective approach. He wants to approach China with a focus on mutual interests. He sees that the United States does not seek to contain China; on the contrary, the rise of a strong, prosperous China can be a source of strength for the community of nations. Obama's good intention went to the extent of declaring, "We will work to deepen our strategic and economic dialogue, and improve communication between our militaries."

Who is the wiser and who is the arrogant and also aggressive? I think the wiser is Obama, and the arrogant is Romney. The wiser has strategies and plans to achieve his goals in a peaceful atmosphere; the other however, hasn't revealed any plans to curb distorted trade with China, but just threats of no value.

b) Russia

In March 2012, at a summit in South Korea, Obama told Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that he would have more ability to negotiate with the Russians about missile defence after the November election.

This conversation drew swift rebuke from Republicans. Romney quickly joined the chorus. Romney announced that Russia is the biggest geopolitical threat facing America. He also stated that "the idea that Obama has more flexibility in mind for Russia is very, very troubling indeed. The president seemed to be willing to negotiate with Russians on matters he was hiding from the American people.

Uncertain of what he was saying, he changed his opinion by saying that, "The No. 1 national security threat, of course, to our nation is a nuclear Iran."

In another statement he said, "Russia does continue to battle us in the U.N. time and time again. I have clear eyes on this. I'm not going to wear rose-coloured glasses when it comes to Russia, or Mr. Putin. And I'm certainly not going to say to him, I'll give you more flexibility after the election."

As it seems, Romney has no diplomacy at all concerning Russia or Iran. The most decisive difference between Romney and Obama however, is their attitudes toward diplomacy. In spite of a strong start, the Obama administration did not invest sufficient political capital into diplomacy at the end of the day. Nor did Tehran. There are some indications that Obama in a second term will have greater manoeuvrability to double down on diplomacy and that, hopefully, Tehran will follow suit.

Romney, however, is not likely to go down the path of negotiations. This is a crucial difference, since the only thing that may prevent a military confrontation down the road is a sincere effort to fully explore the diplomatic option as soon as possible after the US elections.

And while Obama stressed his commitment to having "the strongest military in the world" he added "I also want to lead

with diplomacy. I also want to lead with our values and our ideals."

Obama then focused on local issues saying "I also want to make sure that we understand that if we're going to be strong abroad, we've got to do some nation-building here at home and so take half of the money that we were spending on war to pay down the deficit, and use a whole bunch of it to rebuild America, putting people back to work with roads and bridges and schools and infrastructure.

"All that can help us grow and, ultimately, will help to finance what we need to keep us safe," he said.

Who is fitter for the White House, a man who wants to confront Russia directly, thus forgetting that it is also a super power influencing many parts in the world as well, or a man who is so sure of his military power but wants to lead with the American values and ideals?

c) Iran

There is little that can be said about the Romney campaign's Iran policy. Little of it is known, as Republican candidate Mitt Romney has revealed only sound bites about his policy on Iran. The little that is known indicates that Romney is positioning himself as the anti-Obama candidate on Iran - and that his centre of gravity revolves around the red lines, positions and policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Romney's criticism against Obama centres on three main points: That Obama betrayed the Iranian people by not overtly supporting the Green Movement in 2009, that Obama has thrown Israel under the bus by not being serious about military force and red lines on Iran, and that Obama has not been serious about sanctioning Iran.

As Trita Parsi put it, the accusation that Obama betrayed the Iranian people is off the mark. The leaders of the Green Movement were actually concerned that Obama would express support for them, fearing that America's

endorsement would discredit them inside Iran. "We had hoped he would say nothing, actually," a Moussavi strategist told me. "[We] didn't want anyone to play into the hands of conservatives. We were worried that [the Obama administration] might say something stupid. That they would make life more miserable for us." (3).

Obama's balancing act was also supported by the Europeans, who were "basically grateful that [the Americans] weren't putting their foot in their mouths," according to an EU diplomat.

However, as the Iranian regime's violence against its own citizens became increasingly brutal and the human rights abuses intensified, frustration with Obama's careful approach grew accordingly in Iran. Obama waited until June 23, 2009, to condemn the violence in Iran. Prior to that, all statements expressed criticism, but did not condemn the actions of the Iranian government. This disillusionment with Obama was particularly strong among the street activists who, over the course of the summer of 2009, began demanding a bolder American posture.

Still, as the journalist Omid Memarian has argued, the line Romney advocates would "have ended the political life of the pro-democracy movement in Iran, which remains the only hope for real change in the country." While Obama's approach was too focused on the nuclear issue and insufficient when it came to the moral support America could have offered the Iranian people, it was by no means a betrayal. (In fact, if anything, Obama's betrayal of the Iranian people was arguably committed later, when he adopted increasingly blind and indiscriminate sanctions on Iran.)

Secondly, Romney criticizes Obama for having "thrown Israel under the bus" by not being serious about military force and red lines on Iran. There is little doubt that tensions have risen significantly between Israel and the United States during the past four years, much of it due to diverging perspectives on how to handle the Palestinian issue, Iran's nuclear program and the Arab Spring. But Obama has done nothing even close to throwing Israel under the bus. On the contrary, it is the

government of Netanyahu that has actively and deliberately sought to undermine Obama's diplomatic strategy with Iran.

Listening to his generals, Obama resisted the pressure from Netanyahu to adopt a red line with Iran that essentially would mean that the United States would have to go to war with Iran right away. But Obama did concede a very critical point to Netanyahu: he very publicly put his red line at weaponization, making clear that if the Iranians were to begin building a bomb (as compared to just engaging in low-level enrichment activities), he would take military action.

Rightly or wrongly, the Bush administration never adopted that red line with North Korea. Had they done so, and had they acted on it, the United States would have gone to war with nuclear North Korea in October 2006. Today, the United States might still have been at war with that country - a proposition not even the most hawkish voices in Washington advocate.

It is unlikely that Romney would have yielded even more to the Israelis on this issue, lest he would overrule the firm advice from his generals - the same advice George W. Bush decided not to disregard.

The most inaccurate criticism from the Romney campaign against the Obama administration is that the president has not been serious about sanctioning Iran. Reality is that Obama has sanctioned Iran more than any other president, and by building an international coalition against Iran - something the Bush administration did not achieve, and which the Republicans in Congress lobbied against - Tehran is now facing one of the strictest sanctions regimes in history. Mindful of the Romney campaign's apparent inclination to go it alone à la George Bush, Romney would arguably achieve far less in this area than Obama has. In fact, Reza Marashi points out, some in Tehran may hope for a Romney victory precisely because of the calculation that Romney will not be able to sustain the international sanctions regime against Iran (3).

The most decisive difference between the two sides, however, is their attitudes toward diplomacy. In spite of a strong start, the Obama administration did not invest sufficient political capital into diplomacy at the end of the day. Nor did Tehran. There are some indications that Obama in a second term will have greater maneuverability to double down on diplomacy and that, hopefully, Tehran will follow suit (3).

Romney, however, is not likely to go down the path of negotiations. This is a crucial difference between Obama and Romney. Obama is keen to prevent a military confrontation with Tehran by going through diplomatic channels first.

Netanyahu spokesman Mark Regev declined comment on the debate. Calling Iran the "greatest threat of all," Romney claimed Iran is "four years closer to a nuclear weapon."

Obama repeated his position that he will not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon and vowed to "stand with Israel" if it is attacked by Iran.

Israel, accusing Iran of developing an atomic bomb, has repeatedly threatened to attack Iran's nuclear program if it believes international sanctions have failed.

Iran, which says its nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes, accused the candidates of pandering to Israel.

"The debate was a race between the two candidates to demonstrate their greater devotion to the Zionist regime," said Iran's state TV.

Again, we see from Romney's part a readiness for military confrontation, thus seeing the relationship with Iran from the stand point of Israel only, while Barak Obama in handling the problem prefers sanctions first which already produced its effect and reduced the value of the Iranian currency to unprecedented levels, then keeping war as a last resort.

Who is fitter for the White House then, a President who doesn't mind confronting the world with a nuclear war, thus threatening world's peace, or a President who cares for the safety of the whole region and believes in effective diplomacy

combined with strong sanction which together might make Iran to reconsider the situation and listen to the voice of reason?

d) International trade

According to the office of the U.S. Trade Representative "The United States is the world's largest economy and largest exporter and importer of goods and services....U.S. goods and services exports supported an estimated 9.7 million jobs in 2011 (USTR, 2012)."

But international trade is not without its costs. According to the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO) America has been importing more from China than it has exported there. "Trade deficits matter: 2.7 million U.S. jobs have been lost over the past decade due to America's growing trade deficit with China," Connell (2012) writes. These losses occurred all over America, in a variety of sectors.

How can Americans reap the benefits of international trade, while offsetting the job losses that come with it? President Obama and Mitt Romney both propose confronting China about their financial and commercial practices, but propose different ways of tackling the problem.

President Obama has taken its case against Chinese tariffs (taxes on foreign trade) and dumping policies (flooding the market with cheap goods) to the World Trade Organization on several occasions, on cases ranging from tires to auto parts (Fox Business.com, August 16, 2012; Mason, 2012), and won. He also achieved congressional ratification of several international trade treaties signed by former President George W. Bush which had been languishing in the legislative branch (Fox Business.com, August 16, 2012).

As Gerard Dumenil and Dominique Levy of Le Monde write: "President Barack Obama has made it a key issue of his reelection campaign. There is a new word, "insourcing," the opposite of "outsourcing" or sub-contracting. The idea is to

return industrial production to national territory (Dumenil and Levy, 2012)."

Obama backs the "Bring Jobs Home Act [which] would provide a 20 percent tax break for the costs of moving jobs back to the United States and would rescind business expense deductions available to companies that are associated with the cost of moving operations overseas (Barrett, 2012)." This would amend the tax code to end tax breaks for companies that outsource American jobs.

Governor Romney has promised to designate China a "currency manipulator," accusing Beijing of artificially lowering its yuan to make its products cheaper than those made in America (Kitfield, 2012; Lynch, 2012).

Romney also hopes to expand free trade to the Middle East, allowing more Muslim countries to trade with Americans (Romney, 2007). On his 2012 campaign website, Romney calls for free trade, including getting Trade Promotion Authority (the ability to fast-track free trade negotiations without Congressional input), and supporting more trade with Asia in the Trans-Pacific Partnership. He does not support the "Bring Jobs Home Act" as some business groups fear it would reduce our competitiveness in the international arena and complicate the tax code (Gerard, 2012; Barrett, 2012).

In conclusion, both candidates are both advocating aggressive international trade positions, though they differ on the specifics. The two nominees have a plan, but both can take positions as divergent (4).

e) The Military

At the final presidential debate, Mitt Romney accused Barack Obama of reducing the number of ships in the U.S. Navy to the lowest level since World War I. He said, "The Navy said they needed 313 ships to carry out their mission," Romney said. "We're now at under 285. We're headed down to the low 200s if we go through a sequestration. That's unacceptable to me."

But Obama responded with one of his most memorable zingers of the night:

"Well, governor, we also have fewer horses and bayonets, because the nature of our military has changed," Obama said. "We have these things called aircraft carriers where planes land on them. We have these ships that go underwater, nuclear submarines." (5).

Mitt Romney's campaign is out with a new campaign ad after Monday's debate attacking President Obama over cuts to the military.

Romney's ad, which likely has an eye toward Virginia, a military-heavy battleground state, criticizes Obama for \$1 trillion in cuts to the Pentagon that could occur if sequestration goes into effect.

The ad takes footage of Obama saying at the debate that America is stronger now than when he took office, and splices it with Romney's comments Monday night that the U.S. Navy is smaller now than at any time since 1917.

"I will not cut our military budget by a trillion dollars, which is a combination of the budget cuts the president has," Romney says in the ad. "That, in my view, is making our future less certain and less secure."

Romney has vowed not to cut the military or allow the sequestration cuts occur. Obama said that sequestration would not take place; he and Democrats blame Republicans for blocking any compromise in Congress on sequestration by refusing to raise taxes.

The Pentagon is already planning roughly \$500 billion in cuts that stemmed from last year's Budget Control Act deal, and would be hit with another \$500 billion over the next decade if sequestration goes into effect.

The footage from the Romney campaign's ad focuses on the candidates tangling over the size of the military at Monday's debate, as Romney warned the Navy and Air Force was reaching historically low levels (5).

Mitt Romney should have known that America has reached a point where military spending already covers 50% of the budget. The costs of the American bases around the world are draining the economy. How can the budget be balanced without cutting in the area where spending is over 50 per cent?

f- Iraq

Mitt Romney articulated the clearest differentiation of himself from the president in his speech at the Virginia Military Institute:

“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.”

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. The President tried—and failed—to secure a responsible and gradual drawdown that would have better secured our gains.”

However, Romney usually becomes very unspecific as to how he would address further challenges unfolding from the Arab Spring; the difficult first steps with the new government of Egypt, argued by many to be the center of the Arab world; the course of action he would take in Syria, where military action seems unlikely; and the brutality of regimes friendly to U.S.-interests, such as Bahrain, whose unrest could have equally far-reaching effects on everything from stability in the Arab world to the power and ambitions of nearby Iran (6).

Mitt Romney seems to forget that the unrest in Iraq was due to the American invasion to Iraq made by the Republican President George W. Bush. This meaningless war was not intended to spread democracy in the region as the Republicans claimed but to seize the Iraqi oil. There was no excuse for such war which killed millions of the Iraqis and completely destroyed the Iraqi economy. The false excuse the Republicans forwarded for such terrible war was that Iraq possessed weapons of mass-destruction and has strong relations with Al-qa'dah. Before and after the occupation of Iraq none of these allegations were found true. It was a big lie the Republicans released, and the result was the destruction of a whole nation!

The unrest in Iraq is therefore due to the greed and imperialistic conduct of the Republicans, and now it is the responsibility of Barak Obama to clean up the big mess the Republicans caused.

Romney accuses Obama of not negotiating a proper Status of Forces Agreement in Iraq. It should be reiterated; Obama followed the SOFA that was negotiated by the Bush administration. When the Obama administration takes credit for ending the war in Iraq, it is definitely looking past the fact that it inherited the agreement -- which stipulated terms of U.S. withdrawal in accordance with the wished of the nascent Iraqi government.

Since then, the administration has been criticized for not enacting a deal that would allow U.S. forces to remain in the region. However, the agreement that the Bush administration negotiated stipulated that the Iraqi government would have the final say on U.S. forces remaining in the country. The government opted for withdrawal.

Ending the war in Iraq was a central Obama campaign promise in the 2008 election. But Romney is correct that the Obama administration tried to negotiate a "status of forces agreement" (SOFA) with the Iraqi government that would have allowed the U.S. to keep troops in Iraq after an earlier

agreement reached by the Bush administration lapsed at the end of 2011.

The two sides could not reach agreement on immunity for U.S. troops, but up until the end, the administration was willing to keep 3,000 to 4,000 troops in Iraq. That's less than 10,000, but news reports at the time said that military commanders had wanted to keep 14,000 to 18,000 troops in Iraq.

When Obama announced he was withdrawing all U.S. troops after he failed to reach a new SOFA deal with the Iraqis, Romney criticized the outcome of the negotiations:

"It is my view that the withdrawal of all of our troops from Iraq by the end of this year is an enormous mistake, and failing by the Obama administration. The precipitous withdrawal is unfortunate -- it's more than unfortunate, I think it's tragic. It puts at risk many of the victories that were hard won by the men and women who served there."

I wonder, what victories the American troops had won in Iraq? What victories Mitt Romney are talking about? The killing of millions of the Iraqis, the collapse of the Iraqi economy, the destruction of the Iraqis homes and properties, the wars between the religious sects and the increase of the Iranian influence in Iraq?

With his imperialistic mind Romney wants to leave in Iraq 10,000 to 30,000 troops. As a response, Obama answered back that having any troops in Iraq "would not help us in the Middle East."

Romney didn't understand Obama's words and thought that Obama forwarded a vague answer. On the contrary, Obama knows well that the Iraqis want to liberate their country from the American occupation, and the withdrawal of the American troops will build trust between the two nations. A trust that had been lost due to the ruin American troops had caused in Iraq and the torture the Iraqis received at the hands of the Americans in Abo Ghareeb prison.

In his negotiations, Obama uses high diplomacy with the military power looming in the back ground. He doesn't use force to impose his policy as his predecessor did, but rather uses a diplomacy taking into account the interest of America as well as the benefit of the nation he is negotiating with.

The political decisions of Obama and the Democrats are not influenced by the imperialistic views of the neo-conservatives, the Christian right, the Tea Party and the Judeo-Christian coalition. Those were the ones who were behind the war against Iraq. In this respect we do not forget the names of the neo-conservatives: Paul Wolfowitz, Charles Perls, Douglas Feith. Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld and others who pushed George W. Bush to wage war against Iraq.

President Obama realizes that the interests of America can be achieved by raising the slogan: "We work together towards a better future", a slogan that is totally absent from the vocabulary of Mitt Romney. Mitt Romney on the other hand is adopting the outdated slogans raised by the neo-conservatives and their allies: " America is divinely ordained to lead the world, American hegemony is pre-destined, America is a super power, America is the land of democracy and freedom and she must teach them to the world, America must have access to the natural resources of other countries by force – as happened with Iraq".

The diplomacy Obama is using in his foreign policy is commendable and brings instant fruits, because it is based on peace and good intention. Obama realizes that compulsion brings compulsion, hardship brings hardship and hostility brings hostility.

f) Afghanistan

As for Afghanistan, Romney is criticizing the plan to withdraw U.S. forces by 2014, calling it Obama's "biggest mistake."

"President Obama ended the Iraq War...Mitt Romney would have left thirty thousand troops there ... and called bringing them home 'tragic.' Obama's brought thirty thousand soldiers back from Afghanistan. And has a responsible plan to end the war. Romney calls it Obama's 'biggest mistake.'"

Actually, Romney in a pair of interviews referring to Obama's "biggest mistakes," which included announcing dates when the surge would end and when combat operations would end. Those are tactical questions. Critics say announcing a withdrawal date simply signals to insurgents how long they have to hang in there before the Americans leave; supporters say it motivates the Afghan government to improve its forces. But in any case it is not a criticism of ending the war.

Romney has at times been vague as to whether he would prefer fighting to continue past 2014, but in Monday's debate he said he agreed with the current plan: "We're going to be finished by 2014, and when I'm president, we'll make sure we bring our troops out by the end of 2014." (7).

So as we see the man is not consistent in his views, once he announces that Obama has made a big mistake by withdrawing U.S. forces from Afghanistan by 2014, and then he agrees with Obama's plan!

Romney also supported Obama's increased use of drones to target militants in Pakistan's tribal region - a highly controversial program in Pakistan where people view it as a violation of their sovereignty and as killing innocent civilians - and said he too would have carried out the raid that killed Osama bin Laden.

"I think that in substance there was very little to distinguish between the positions taken by the president and Mitt Romney," said retired Pakistani diplomat Tariq Fatemi. "It would mean that both political parties, barring some other development, they will pursue the same policy with Pakistan."

President Obama and Mitt Romney agreed strongly in their third and final debate that the United States needed to vigorously expand its leadership role in a dangerous world, pressing its economic interests, using its military when necessary and spreading its values. But most Americans apparently don't agree. Polls show that after a decade of two wars and a brutal recession, most Americans have grown deeply sceptical of the benefits of the global leadership role that the

President and the Republican challenger, backed by the foreign policy establishment, insist is the nation's wisest course and destiny.

Americans also have grown more jaded about U.S. foreign aid and nation-building efforts after billions of dollars were spent in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan over the last decade. 64% of Americans believe that countries that receive U.S. aid "end up resenting America. Only 29% disagreed.

Leaders of both parties, and an influential array of nongovernmental groups and think tanks, push strongly for the government to use leverage to promote human rights abroad as a moral imperative consistent with American values (8).

g) Palestine

Mitt Romney told donors in a newly released video clip that Palestinians "have no interest" in peace with Israel and suggested that efforts at Middle East peace under his administration would languish.

Romney says that Palestinians are "committed to the destruction and elimination of Israel" and that the prospects for a two-state solution to Middle East peace were dim.

"You hope for some degree of stability, but you recognize that this is going to remain an unsolved problem, and we kick the

ball down the field and hope that ultimately, somehow, something will happen and resolve it," Romney said.

The remarks are contained in a clip posted Tuesday on the website of the magazine Mother Jones. The magazine said it had obtained the video of a \$50,000-a-plate fundraiser in Boca Raton, Florida

In the latest clip, Romney is asked about the "Palestinian problem". He gives a detailed, though somewhat rambling, response, and says "the Palestinians have no interest whatsoever in establishing peace," and "the pathway to peace is almost unthinkable to accomplish."

Mother Jones's website quotes Romney as saying he was against applying any pressure on Israel to give up disputed territory for a two-state solution with the Palestinians.

"The idea of pushing on the Israelis to give something up to get the Palestinians to act is the worst idea in the world," Romney says, according to the magazine.

Obama administration officials, notably Defence Secretary Leon Panetta, recently have put added pressure on the Israelis to help restart peace talks. President Obama, like his Republican predecessor, has pushed for a two-state solution -- though the Obama administration has recently fought efforts at the United Nations to recognize a state for the Palestinians.

The Palestinian government was not pleased with either candidate, who made only glancing references to the Palestinians. Nabil Abu Rdeneh, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said without a resumption of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, "there will be no success for American policy in the Middle East."

"It was clear that each candidate was seeking to outdo the other in stressing pro-Israel credentials," to woo Jewish voters, wrote Haviv Rettig Gur, Washington correspondent for the Times of Israel.

Gur estimated that President Obama, who declined to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the United Nations General Assembly this month, said the word "Israel" 22 times.

Republican challenger Mitt Romney criticized Obama, saying the president wants "to put 'daylight' between the United States and Israel" as he sought to show that he would be a better friend to Israel.

Palestinians complained that the Mideast peace process barely got a mention in the final U.S. presidential campaign debate, saying American standing in the Middle East will be doomed without a greater effort to resolve the festering Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Such sentiments were shared region wide, as officials and analysts noted that President Barack Obama and Republican rival Mitt Romney expressed few differences on key issues such as Iran's suspect nuclear program, the war in Afghanistan and the tumultuous changes of the Arab spring.

"It's true that Obama doesn't have a coherent policy toward the Arab world but neither does Romney," said Shadi Hamid, director of research at the Brookings Doha Center. "What we saw last night is depressing lack of new ideas for U.S. policy in the Middle East."

While neither Obama nor Romney spoke much about the Israel-Palestinian conflict during Monday night's debate, both men voiced heavy support for Israel's security in an apparent gesture to influential Jewish voters.

Nabil Abu Rdeneh, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said he understood the candidates are wary about discussing the sensitive conflict just two weeks before the election.

"But it should be clear to the United States that without solving the Palestinians-Israeli conflict, there will be no success for American policy in the Middle East," he said.

The Palestinians have grown disillusioned with Obama, who took office promising to make the peace process a top priority and to take a tough stand against Israeli settlements in occupied territories.

Instead, Obama failed to persuade Israel to halt settlement construction, and substantive peace efforts have remained frozen throughout his term. The Palestinians have refused to return to the negotiating table without a settlement freeze, saying continued Israeli construction in occupied territories they claim is a sign of bad faith.

At the same time, the Palestinians are deeply wary of Romney, who declared earlier this year that the Palestinians have "no interest whatsoever" in peace.

Romney's long friendship with hard-line Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his alliance with Jewish-American casino magnate Sheldon Adelson, a strong Netanyahu supporter, have further raised their suspicions.

During Monday's debate, the two candidates seemed to be trying to outdo each other in their support for Israel's security, mentioning the threats posed to the Jewish state by Iran, the civil war in neighbouring Syria and militant groups armed with rockets.

Romney briefly criticized Obama's failure to advance Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts but gave no clue as to how he would promote peace. It was the only time in the debate that the Palestinians were even mentioned.

"It was a sin of omission, and it was clearly the elephant in the room," said Hanan Ashrawi, a senior member of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"They are talking about peace, stability, democracy, freedom and human rights, and they both didn't touch the Palestinian question, which is the main issue in the region that's the key to peace and embodies the need for human rights and role of law and justice," she said.

Romney earned the ire of Palestinians by suggesting that they are mired in poverty because of their cultural inferiority to Israel.

At a fundraiser in Jerusalem on Monday, Republican presidential aspirant Mitt Romney took a moment to praise Israel's wealth and "economic vitality," contrasting it with the relative poverty of the Palestinians next door. What really infuriated Palestinians, though, was his explanation for the economic disparity: "Culture makes all the difference," along with "the hand of providence." Saeb Erekat, a senior adviser to President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority, said Romney is being "racist" and uninformed by ignoring the widely recognized impact of Israel's prolonged economic restrictions on Gaza and the West Bank. Still, his remarks were welcomed by the Jewish-American donors — notably casino billionaire Sheldon Adelson — who collectively gave Romney more than \$1 million at the event, and as Dan Amira notes at New York, "American voters don't have an overly fond opinion of Palestinians." Could infuriating Palestinians actually help Romney win in November?

Yes. Romney is saying the right things: "We live in a time when being pro-Israel has become a key test of a candidate's presidential fitness, and rightly so," says Bret Stephens at The Wall Street Journal. Romney just passed that test in Israel, showing uncharacteristic "conviction and sincerity" in his admiration for all that Israel has accomplished. What got Romney in trouble with Palestinians — that "Israeli success, in his mind, is earned — and so is Palestinian failure" — will only help him in the U.S. Personally, "I'm beginning to warm to Mitt."

The point of Romney's world tour wasn't to curry favor with Israel-philes so much as to prove to all Americans that he would be "a Reaganesque commander-in-chief," says Joshua Greenman at the New York Daily News. "All I can say is: Oy, Mitt. Oy." It's not just "tone-deaf" but "damn near dangerous" for a would-be U.S. president to jump into Mideast politics by calling Palestinians "culturally inferior," ignoring their "legitimate gripes" about being occupied by Israel and shunned

by Arab neighbours, and suggesting "the Lord made Israel rich." Yikes.

"Mideast gaffe could cost Mitt Romney in... run for the White House"

It might help Romney, but not Israel: There's a word for Romney's taking Israel's side on everything from Iran to economic development: "Pandering," says Stephen Walt at Foreign Policy. He wants Jewish voters, donors, and "Christian Zionists" to support him, and not Obama. But "this sort of pandering is a bipartisan activity," and Obama's holding his own. It's probably good politics, but for anyone who cares about foreign policy, "the good news, such as it is, is that both Romney and Obama are probably lying" about their "love" and "unshakable commitment" to Israel.

"What 'unshakeable commitment' to Israel really means".

h) The Arab Spring

Both Obama and Romney also said they oppose direct U.S. military involvement in the civil war in which rebels are fighting to topple Syrian President Bashar Assad. But they disagreed over arming the Syrian opposition.

Obama warned of the risk of giving the rebels heavy weapons that could later be used against the U.S. or its allies. Romney said he would make sure that those trying to oust Assad "have the arms necessary to defend themselves" after being vetted by the U.S.

Romney's stance won praise from Syria's political opposition in exile.

"Obama is not doing what he is supposed to be doing. By not arming the (rebel) Free Syrian Army with heavy weapons, he is giving Assad the upper hand," said Muhieddine Lathkani, a member of the Syrian National Council, an umbrella of opposition groups.

In discussing the Egyptian revolution, which swept longtime U.S. ally Hosni Mubarak from power and brought an Islamist president to power, Romney and Obama both voiced caution.

Obama welcomed the democratic transition in Egypt but stressed the need to respect women's rights and maintain its peace agreement with Israel.

Romney used somewhat tougher language, implying that the election of President Mohammed Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, was among "a number of disturbing events."

Muslim Brotherhood spokesman Mahmoud Ghozlan sharply criticized Romney, noting Morsi was elected in Egypt's first democratic election in history.

"Romney should respect the principle of not interfering in other countries' affairs," Ghozlan said (9).

The third and last presidential debate of the US election, focused on foreign policy. President Barack Obama won the debate, but his Republican challenger, Mitt Romney, did not commit any gaffes, looked presidential and tried to portray himself as a man of peace who would adopt a centrist-oriented foreign policy.

The President accused Romney of wanting to take the country back to the 1980s as far as foreign policy was concerned.

Romney tried to change his image of a warmonger who would revert to a neo-conservative foreign policy, which many right-wing Republicans are keen on. He knew that the people fear he would adopt a hawkish right-wing foreign policy.

It remains to be seen just what type of foreign policy a Romney presidency would adopt should he win the election. In various instances during the campaign, especially in the Republican primaries, Romney adopted a hard-line – and inconsistent – approach towards Obama's foreign policy record and has, on a number of occasions (including in the third debate) accused the President of 'apologising' to the Muslim world during his famous Cairo speech. Obama called this claim the "biggest whopper" of the campaign.

Monday's debate was very civil without any knockout blows, although Obama's response to Romney's criticism that the US Navy had fewer ships than in 1916 – namely that “We also have fewer horses and bayonets than we did in 1916” – came close to a knockout blow.

Obama suggested that Romney's world view was obsolete, adding: “We have these things called aircraft carriers, where planes land on them. We have these ships that go underwater, nuclear submarines.”

Obama and Romney discussed the Arab Spring, the al-Qaeda threat, Iran, Israel and China. Proof of how the September 11 attacks still dominate US foreign policy was the fact that Mali – where a group linked to al-Qaeda has taken control of the northern part of the country – was mentioned several times in the debate, yet there was no mention of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, Nato, Europe, the eurozone crisis, sub-Saharan Africa, Canada or Japan.

Obama did a reasonable job of portraying Romney as a candidate who lacked the consistency to be President and highlighted his previous support for a continued troop presence in Iraq, his opposition to nuclear treaties with Russia and his changing policy on when US troops should leave Afghanistan.

“I know you haven't been in a position to actually execute foreign policy but every time you've offered an opinion you've been wrong,” Obama told Romney.

Romney accused Obama of allowing a “rising tide of chaos” to sweep the Middle East, while congratulating the President “on taking out Osama bin Laden and taking on the leadership of al-Qaeda”. In an attempt to distance himself from the Republican Party's more hawkish elements, Romney added: “But we can't kill our way out of this. We must have a comprehensive strategy.”

Obama's response was that he was glad his opponent had recognised the threat posed by al-Qaeda but reminded voters that Romney had previously labelled Russia the number one geopolitical foe of the US, and not al-Qaeda.

Later in the debate the President accused Romney of wanting to take the country back to the 1980s as far as foreign policy was concerned. Obama also said Romney believed in social policies of the 1950s and economic policies of the 1920s.

Romney stressed that "We're four years closer to a nuclear Iran", although he gave the impression that he would support military action against Teheran only as a last resort.

He accused Obama of not being supportive enough of America's ally Israel, which the President has not visited since taking office four years ago. This accusation probably earned Romney some votes, especially from voters in the swing state of Florida, where the debate was held, and which has a sizeable Jewish community.

Both candidates declared, however, they would defend Israel if it had to be attacked by Iran, and both vowed to pursue tough policies against Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

They also both opposed military intervention in Syria, although Romney said it was time to arm those Syrian rebels who share the same values of the US. Obama did not go so far on this issue, even though some media reports have indicated that the US is already arming some factions within the Syrian rebel movement.

China also featured in the debate, with Romney stating that on day one as President he would declare the country a 'currency manipulator'.

He said in the debate: "On day one, I will label them a currency manipulator, which allows us to apply tariffs where they're taking jobs. They're stealing our intellectual property, our patents, our designs, our technology, hacking into our computers, counterfeiting our goods."

Such a policy by Romney, of course, might lead to a trade war between China and the US, which is hardly an ideal development, but such talk always sounds good in an election.

Obama also appeared to adopt a tough line towards China, calling the giant power an “adversary”, and claiming to have taken more punitive action against China than George W. Bush took in two terms.

Perhaps Romney’s strongest point in the debate was when he said he considered a nuclear-armed Iran as the greatest threat to US security, as well as the threat from al-Qaeda terrorism – which had been singled out in the debate by Obama as the main threat to US security (10).

At least president Obama has a foreign policy. Romney and Paul Ryan haven’t spent time thinking and speaking a lot about foreign policy. They have simply taken the path of least resistance and parroted the views of their neocon advisers. They talk all tough at Iran and Syria and label the president a weak apologist and buildup bogymen and rant about how it’s amazing that many of the neocons who were involved in the Iraq debacle are back riding high. Foreign Policy magazine reports that 17 of Romney’s 24 special advisers on foreign policy were in Bush’s administration. But no one has come along to replace them, or reinstitute some kind of Poppy Bush-James Baker-Brent Scowcroft realpolitik internationalism.

The neocons are still where the GOP intellectual energy is, and they’re still in the blogosphere hammering candidates who stray from their hawkish orthodoxy. Democrats have claimed the international center once inhabited by Bush senior and his advisers.

On foreign and domestic policy, Republicans have outsourced their brains to right-wing think tanks. It’s one thing for conservatives at the American Enterprise Institute and other think tanks to sit around and theorize about the number of people who are “dependent” on government programs and to deplore the trend, or to strategize on privatizing Medicare. If you’ve got a lot of people on government programs, their response is not to help those people get off the programs; it’s to cut the programs.

The Romney campaign has turned conservative theory into ideology and gone off the cliff with it. If you want to inspire, lead and unite people, it won't fly to take ideologically driven findings and present them unvarnished to voters.

At the Clinton Global Initiative Tuesday, Romney talked about tying foreign aid to "the promotion of work and the fostering of free enterprise" in the Middle East and other developing countries.

It was a variation on what Romney said on the infamous leaked tape to the fat-cat donors about half the country being victims and moochers, promulgating the idea that any aid makes people worse off instead of better off. Next he will want to bring back debtors' prisons.

Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and the neocons were inspired by the idea of forcing democracy on Iraq, assuming that people would just become better – and incredibly grateful to us.

Now the neocons inside Romney's head are pushing the same idea: that we can whack countries in the Middle East and they'll behave.

As Dan Senor, a top foreign policy adviser to both Romney and Ryan, told Andrea Mitchell on MSNBC on Tuesday about Iran: "We're not saying the military action should be used. But we are arguing that the threat of military action should be credible so it focuses the Iranian leadership on reaching some diplomatic solution."

That was exactly the argument the same neocon gaggle used when they were pushing an invasion of Iraq. But somehow the diplomatic part got superseded.

As President Obama said on 60 Minutes, "If Governor Romney is suggesting that we should start another war, he should say so."

Looking at crumpling poll numbers, Romney may learn that when you don't think for yourself, you tank.

Reference : The neocons inside Mitt Romney's head. By: Maureen Dowd

K) The economy

It should be pointed out that the American economy will not recover in a short period. Decades are needed for sound recovery, so neither Obama nor Romney would be able to revive the economy in a short time but rather identify several growth areas into which they inject capitals or investments that will encourage economic growth. During his rule in the White House Obama undertook several financial reforms. These had resulted in the following:

- 1- The treasury Sold 1.5 billion shares of Citigroup at a profit.
- 2- G-20 summit produced a \$1.1 trillion deal to combat the global fin Economy grew 5.9% in 4th quarter.
- 3- U.S. Economy: Manufacturing grew by most since 2004. ref
- 4- U.S. GDP up 3.2% in first quarter.
- 5- Consumer spending showed biggest rise in 3 years.
- 6- Orders for most durable goods rose.
- 6- Wholesale inventories and sales rose in March.
- 7- \$26 billion state aid bill triggered a surge of private municipal investment.
- 8- The Economy Has Been Growing – seasonally adjusted change in GDP by quarter 2007-2010.
- 9- The Private Sector Has Begun to Add Jobs – Monthly change in nonfarm employment 2008-2010. ref
- 10- GDP would have been lower without the Recovery Act (2007-2013 projection).
- 11- Unemployment would have been higher without ARRA (2008-2010).

- 12- The gap between actual and full-employment GDP would have been much larger without TARP and ARRA (2008-2010).
- 13- CBO found 3.7 Million jobs created by stimulus (May 2010).
- 14- Job loss exploded under Bush, improves under Obama.
- 15- 682,370 jobs created under the Recovery Act Between January 1 — March 31, 2010.
- 16- New jobless claims tumble.
- 17- March payrolls surge by 162,000 US says.
- 18- March jobs data showed biggest growth in three years .
- 19- U.S. economy added 90000 jobs in April .
- 20- Jobless rates dropped in 34 states and DC (AP).

The updated list of Obama's most significant accomplishments was published by the 3 Chics Politico in the less than 2 years since he was elected as President of the United States:

1. Appointing two Supreme Court Justices: When people consider their presidential voting decision, most don't consider that amongst the most important and enduring presidential responsibilities is the president's ability to appoint supreme court justices. This is arguably a president's biggest opportunity to influence his country, because Supreme Court justices sit until they retire or pass away, so the impact of his decision generally will last many decades beyond his years as president. Obama has been fortunate enough to have two Supreme Court Justices retire in his first few years in office and he has managed to secure both of his nominations through wise selection and political skill. He has added two Democrats, replacing two moderate Democrats in the process. If a Republican has won the presidency instead, we would now be looking at an unbalanced Supreme Court with six conservatives and only three liberal judges – a balance that would have been in place for many many decades. In the appointment process, Obama also introduced needed diversity to the bench with two

more women on the court, bringing the count to a record three women sitting, while also introducing the nation's first Hispanic to the Supreme Court with his choice of Sotomayor.

2. Passing Universal Healthcare: Obama accomplished what no prior Democrat could in expanding coverage to 32 million more Americans while simultaneously reducing the deficit by an estimated \$1.3 trillion over the next 20 years. It delivers on every provision of the Patient Bill of Rights that Bill Clinton unsuccessfully tried to get passed, including making it illegal to deny coverage for people with pre-existing conditions and capping out of pocket expenses when people get sick (so people don't go in to bankruptcy after getting ill). It helps shift our medical system's focus to preventative care by covering the cost of early warning tests so our doctors find diseases before they are too advanced - avoiding larger medical expenses down the road and requires the largest and richest American companies to provide insurance for all their employees. It attempts to lower health care costs by forcing all Americans to have medical insurance and pay their fair share so the system is more efficient – similar to how all Americans need to have car insurance – while providing tax credits to help the poor and small businesses afford this coverage. It increases competition by creating marketplace exchanges to make it easier for small businesses and those without insurance to shop and compare plans. It funds co-ops who can offer competitive insurance plans and provide further competition for insurance companies. It allows insurance companies to offer plans across state borders further increasing the supply of competitive plans. It provides funding, infrastructure, and support to automate, digitize, and unify the country's outdated medical information system reducing system-wide costs, improving care, and increasing productivity. Perhaps most importantly, it sets up an independent commission of doctors and medical experts to identify and root out medical system waste, fraud, and abuse and includes many pieces of reform that will reduce the most wasteful medical system practices.

3. Financial industry reform: The most sweeping financial industry reform legislation since the Great Depression, this legislation tries to correct those industry issues that helped

create the current recession we are still digging ourselves out of. It provides a system to allow the government to break apart large financial institutions that threaten the economy, creates a council of federal regulators to coordinate the detection of risks to the financial system, subjects a wider range of financial companies to government oversight, creates a Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to help protect citizens from unscrupulous practices, and reins in banks' ability to trade in risky financial instruments such as credit derivatives.

4. Preventing a 2nd Great Depression: While preventing a depression is not sexy and certainly is reactive, history may say that this is still one of his most important accomplishment to date. The vast majority of economists and experts say that the nation had a high chance of slipping in to a Depression had this stimulus not passed along with the innovative actions of the Fed. Obama has worked with Bernanke and the Fed, put a team of some of the best economic minds around him, helped save America's 3 major car manufacturers from going out of business, passed the largest economic Stimulus Bill in the nation's history, and executed other legislative changes to keep liquidity flowing in our economy, save jobs that would have otherwise been lost, and fund areas of our economy that are strategic and important for our long term economic competitiveness including health care, education, green energy, science, and infrastructure.

Of course, critics will say that the economy today is still sputtering, holds some risk of sliding back in to a recession, and that a real recovery will take many years. These are all true statements and Obama has not moved us from a possible Depression to a fast growing economy – but this is a completely unrealistic, almost childish, expectation given the severity of the financial crisis, our current debt, and other economic realities that we have to deal with. Could he have done more or done it differently? Certainly. I would have loved to see Obama do more, faster to invest in small businesses, help them get loans, and help them become more competitive with the large corporations that increasingly dominate our economy. But today we are not in a horrible depression and

things are stable and this alone is a tremendous accomplishment.

5. Bringing the war in Iraq to an end: Obama has reduced troops from a peak of 170,000 down to 50,000, with the remaining troops focused on training and recruiting Iraqi forces, rather than participating in combat. With this news, Obama delivered on a campaign promise he made while bringing to an end a misguided, expensive, and costly war which served no clear purpose. He also ensured that, in the process of wrapping up efforts in the region, he did so responsibly. Iraq is not in utter chaos as it once was at the peak of the insurgency and it stands a chance of having a reasonable future and being a reasonably stable Democratic state in the Middle East.

6. Passed legislation to curb greenhouse gases and improve the environment: Obama implemented new regulations on power plants, factories, and oil refineries to limit greenhouse gas emissions and curb global warming, required energy producing plants to produce 15% of their energy from renewable sources, allowed states to enact federal fuel efficiency standards above federal standards, increased, for the first time in more than a decade, the fuel economy standards for Model Year 2011 for cars and trucks, funded investment in clean energy technologies through a combination of spending and tax breaks, signed an omnibus public lands bill, which allows for 2 million more acres to be declared wilderness, and issued a Presidential Memorandum to the Department of Energy to implement more aggressive efficiency standards for common household appliances, like dishwashers and refrigerators, which, over the next three decades, will save twice the amount of energy produced by all the coal-fired power plants in America in any given year.

7. Nuclear non-proliferation agreement: Obama met with 47 presidents in a 3 day nuclear summit to lower the nuclear weapons count with a treaty signed between US and Russia, putting the world back on a path to reducing nuclear warheads.

8. Repairing Our Image Abroad: After 8 years of damage to our country's image, Obama has helped repair badly damaged relationships with foreign powers across the world from Russia to Europe and reached out to the Arab world. This is necessary and critical in order for the most influential countries to work together to fight challenges such as Global Warming and Nuclear expansion. It also helps to fight terrorist recruiting by helping change America's negative image. It is increasingly important for the US to engage with other countries as fast-growing nations like Brazil, China, and India join the traditional powerhouses and as America adjusts to a world with more diverse and influential players in the political equation.

9. Lifted Bush restrictions on embryonic stem cell research: Obama provided federal support for stem-cell and new biomedical research, helping make it easier for scientists to find cures for our most dangerous diseases.

10. Reversed George W. Bush's ban on federal funding to foreign organizations that allow abortions.

11. Implemented education reforms: Made higher college more accessible and affordable through significant increases in scholarships and funding, funded early learning programs, and, most importantly, through an innovative program called Race to the Top, spurred reforms in state and local district K-12 education by providing states with incentives to make positive changes to their education systems. Race to the Top prompted 48 states to adopt common standards for K-12. Some notable changes prompted by the program include Illinois lifting a cap on the number of charter schools it allows, Massachusetts making it easier for students in low-performing schools to switch to charters, and West Virginia proposing a merit pay system that includes student achievement in its compensation calculations.

12. Tobacco regulation. On June 22, 2009, Obama signed the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, which, for the first time, gave the U.S. Food & Drug Administration the authority to regulate the manufacturing, marketing, and sale of tobacco.

The list of Obama's accomplishments is staggering for any US president – particularly when he is compared with his predecessors. In less than 2 years, Obama had done what was absolutely essential to maintain a competitive economy, tackled highly challenging and comprehensive economic reforms, and stabilized a very troubling economy. (11).

Colin Powell and other Republicans endorse Obama.

President Obama said he was “proud” and “humbled” to learn he has the support of former Secretary of State Colin Powell, who announced he is endorsing Obama for a second term.

The president added, "I'm grateful to him for his lifetime of service to his country both as a soldier and as a diplomat," the president told 15,000 Virginians on Thursday afternoon. "And every brave American who wears this uniform of this country should know that as long as I'm your commander in chief, we will sustain the strongest military the world has ever known. We will be relentless in pursuit of our enemies. Those are promises I've kept."

Powell broke with the Republican Party to endorse then-Senator Obama in 2008 and offered his continued support for the president saying he's concerned that Gov. Mitt Romney's foreign policy is a "moving target."

Powell said, "I am not quite sure which governor Romney we would be getting."

"I voted for him [Obama] in 2008 and I plan to stick with him in 2012, and I'll be voting for he and for Vice President Joe Biden next month," Powell told CBS News.

Powell said the president's handling of the economy and foreign policy are two of the reasons for his decision. "When he took over the country was in very, very difficult straits, we were in one of the worst recessions we had seen in recent times, close to a depression," Powell said. "We were in real trouble."

Powell added:

"I saw over the next several years stabilization come back in the financial community, housing is now starting to pick up after four years, it's starting to pick up. Consumer confidence is rising. So I think generally we've come out of the dive and we're starting to gain altitude," Powell explained. "It doesn't mean we are problem solved, there are lots of

problems still out there. The unemployment rate is too high. People are still hurting in housing. But I see that we are starting to rise up.”

Powell, who served as secretary of state under former president, George W. Bush, from 2001 to 2005, praised Obama for ending the war in Iraq and winding down the war in Afghanistan, and added that he "did not get us into any new wars." The retired four-star general added that Obama's efforts to protect the United States from terrorist threats is "very, very solid."

Although Powell said he has the "utmost respect" for Romney, he cited concerns about Romney's shifting foreign policies. "The governor who was speaking on Monday night at the debate was saying things that were quite different from what he's said earlier, so I'm not quite sure what Gov. Romney we would be getting with respect to foreign policy."

The former Secretary of State also had concerns about Romney's economic proposals. "As I listen to what his proposals are especially with respect to dealing with our most significant issue, the economy, it's essentially let's cut taxes and compensate for that with other things. But that compensation does not cover all of the cuts intended or the new expenses associated with defense," he said.

The announcement surprised the president who called Powell to personally thank him for his support.

Larry Pressler, former Republican senator from South Dakota, has cast his ballot for Barack Obama, saying "I just got the feeling that Obama will be able to handle this financial crisis better, and I like his financial team of [former Treasury Secretary Robert] Rubin and [former Federal Reserve Chairman Paul] Volcker better." Pressler was the first Vietnam vet to serve in the Senate.

The largest newspaper in the swing state of Ohio, The Cleveland Plain Dealer, endorsed President Obama for a second term today, citing his policies as best for Ohio, noting that's he's been met with unbending resistance and belligerence from Republicans and sounding the alarm on etch-a-sketch Mitt Romney's domestic and foreign policies.

They write:

Much of what beset America during Obama's first term lay outside his direct control. The bobsled slide into recession was in full motion when he took office. The economic calamity has been global; recovery, sporadic and weak. Obama's attempts to reach across the aisle politically were met with unbending resistance, even belligerence...

Romney's tendency to bluster on foreign policy provides more cause for doubt. With tens of thousands of young Americans still in harm's way in Afghanistan, the United States cannot afford to be drawn into new wars without clear national interests at stake or to sap its resources in further open-ended conflicts. The Benghazi killings reveal the risks of an "Arab Spring" in which terrorists have gained new weaponry and new freedom to operate. But these challenges require inventive diplomacy and international engagement, not slogans or swagger.

Romney's tendency to bluster on foreign policy provides more cause for doubt. With tens of thousands of young Americans still in harm's way in Afghanistan, the United States cannot afford to be drawn into new wars without clear national interests at stake or to sap its resources in further open-ended conflicts. The Benghazi killings reveal the risks of an "Arab Spring" in which terrorists have gained new weaponry and new freedom to operate. But these challenges require inventive diplomacy and international engagement, not slogans or swagger.

On the auto bailout, they praise Obama's auto rescue plan and explain the differences between what Romney advocated for and what Obama did, saying Obama's plan was gutsy as it was unpopular at the time – and it worked:

The Republican Bill Dreisbach wrote in his blog:

"The Republican party isn't what it used to be. Our leaders and our most vocal activists have written moderates out of the party and have refused to work with the other side, to the detriment of the nation.

Unfortunately, Mitt Romney has not proven to be able to stand up to our party's most extreme elements. Instead, he has fallen for the "one-size-fits-all" mentality that tax cuts for the already-wealthy will solve all of our problems, and has no workable plans to solve the challenges we face.

President Obama has shown himself to be a common-sense centrist. He has cut taxes when necessary, has taken steps to protect the environment, and has aggressively pursued Islamic extremists who threaten America. Most notably, he has reformed our healthcare system by signing a Republican-inspired healthcare plan into law. In most other points in our party's history, Obama would fit in well as a Republican."

As a Republican for thirty years Jerry Hannon wrote:

"I've been a Republican for nearly fifty years, since I was first able to vote. But most of the GOP of today is alien to the principles of Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt and Dwight Eisenhower, and it has taken on a tone that

is even alien to the principles of my Christian faith. Wonderful public servants like Dick Lugar and Olympia Snowe have been driven from our party, and the formerly broad tent of our party is becoming exclusivist and even a Taliban-like enforcer of ideological extremism.

Under the title: “I no longer recognize my party”, Mike Judd wrote in his blog:

“As a registered Republican I fear I must confess that I no longer recognize the party that I grew up with in Oregon. I voted for Mark Hatfield, Tom McCall and other Republicans who found enough common ground with Democrats to govern. Now I watch in dismay as those in my party boast that their primary objective is to defeat the President. Not to govern. Not to bring together a sense of responsibility and willingness to compromise to solve problems we face - such as the budget, the bridges, the roads and our electric grid that need maintenance and upgrading, which actually costs money?”

Mitt Romney surroundses himself with incompetent politicians and Islamophobic hate mongers

Since 9/11, US Muslims, estimated between six to seven million, have become sensitized to an erosion of their civil rights, with a prevailing belief that America was stigmatizing their faith.

There have been 800 incidents of violence, threats and vandalism against Muslims since 2001. Estimates show that 14 percent of religious discrimination is reported against Muslims.

There is no doubt that there is in the United States a well sponsored groups of people spreading hatred and discord between Muslim and non-Muslim Americans. Glenn Greenwald wrote about ‘terrorism expert industry’, he said, “There is a huge amount of money that is flowing into the pockets of those who can keep people’s fears of terrorism alive. These people are in competition with each other to get their hands on this money and this generates a rhetorical arms race in which the person who can generate the scariest scenario, the “Oh my god, we’re all going to die if we don’t take the (very expensive) action I recommend”, is the winner.

Greenwald continues saying:

“These ‘terrorism experts’ form an incredibly incestuous, mutually admiring little clique in and around Washington. They’re employed at think tanks, academic institutions, and media outlets. They can and do

have mildly different political ideologies — some are more Republican, some are more Democratic — but, as usual for D.C. cliques, ostensible differences in political views are totally inconsequential when placed next to their common group identity and career interest: namely, sustaining the myth of the Grave Threat of Islamic Terror in order to justify their fear-based careers, the relevance of their circle, and their alleged “expertise.” Like all adolescent, insular cliques, they defend one another reflexively whenever a fellow member is attacked, closing ranks with astonishing speed and loyalty; they take substantive criticisms very personally as attacks on their “friends,” because a criticism of the genre and any member in good standing of this fiefdom is a threat to their collective interests.” They built their organizations on lies and survive on a regular diet of false propaganda. These groups of hate mongers has deliberately forgotten that America is for all, and that the Americans are all one.”

Greenwald gloomily sees no end to this in the near future, as each event is hyped for its potential threat. These groups of hate mongers made the fear of terrorism replaces the fear of communism as an ever-present existential threat to the extent that it has exploded way out of proportion to the actual risk. Their strategy is to keep people in suspense and fear.

Of course, the promoters and beneficiaries of the terrorism boondoggle will say that the reason America has not had any major terrorist attacks or anything close to one is because of these preventative measures (12).

War against Terror campaign churned unfathomable lies about Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq and Al-Qaeda’s imminent plans of repeating 9/11 and now 26/11.

For decades, Zionist and Islamophobic hate-mongers within the United States have disrespected Divine personalities in general, and the personality of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Available evidence proves that Islamophobia in the West consists of various stages including incriminating Muslims, insulting sanctities of Islam, extensive negative propaganda against Islam and Muslims, as well as various kinds of discrimination against them. At the same time, despite all such Islamophobic measures and propaganda, enthusiasm of Western people for Islam has been constantly growing in the United States and Europe and a remarkable number of the Western people convert to Islam every year.

After the attack of September 11, Bernard Lewis in his book ‘What went wrong?’ using subtle arguments, placed the blame on Islam and Islamic

traditions for the failure of Middle Eastern societies to develop and modernize like the West. Lewis' book has since been followed by articles and publications, mostly by neoconservative journalists and pundits, who reinforce Lewis' thesis and even blame Islam for the rise of terrorism as well as the rising tension between the West and the Muslim world.

The blame game is led today by neo-conservative pundits who often present Islam as the new villain to be confronted by American military power. They have consistently presented Muslims as incapable of democratic rule, and who espouse values that are antithetical to world peace and religious tolerance.

To ensure that their views are not challenged by academic community, neoconservatives are working hard to undermine academic freedom by intimidating scholars that present a balanced view of the Middle East. Martin Kramer's *Ivory Towers and Sand: The failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America*, and diatribe against Middle East studies in US universities, and Daniel Pipes' *Campus Watch*, an organization devoted to smearing professors critical of U.S foreign policy and Israeli's treatment of Palestinians, are two such examples. This campaign is one that aims to intimidate free thinking on Middle East politics and silence voices that challenge their perspective. In addition to that, we must not forget the other web sites devoted to attack Islam like *answering Islam* (Sam Shamoun), *Middle East Forum* (Daniel Pipes), *Political Islam* (Bill Warner), *jihad Watch* (Robert Spencer and Pamela Geller), *Ayaan Hirsi Ali*, *Wafa Sultan*, *Sam Harris*, *Nonie Darwish*, *Brigitte Gabriel* and so many others.

These websites are a network of groups and individuals funded by elements within the pro-Israel lobby who are pushing Islam phobia on behalf of Israel. These online websites have been leaders in the indictment of Islam, and each of whom is, not coincidentally, a vocal advocate of Israel and its policies. In order to hide their bias and bad intentions about Islam, and seems purely scientific and sincerely honest before their readers, they try their hardest to come across as educated, professional and scholarly.

Rumor mongering causes disunity and chaos in the society setting a group of people against another. This had led to hatred, malice, rancor, and grudges and might eventually result in war. The multiplier effect of rumor mongering cannot be overemphasized and in most cases these effects are usually negative.

Rumor mongering destroys homes and causes dissention between loved ones, including already well-established families. Rumor mongering has not only social-economic effect but also spiritual effect. The character of a rumor monger became questionable after it has been confirmed that a person has no other business than to spread rumors.

John Robert Bolton is an American lawyer and diplomat who served in several Republican administrations. Appointed on a recess appointment, he served as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations from August 2005 until December 2006. He resigned in December 2006, when the recess appointment would have otherwise ended, because he was unlikely to win senate confirmation. Bolton is involved with a broad assortment of conservative think tanks and policy institutes, including the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA).

In the United Nations John Bolton blocked every Palestinian attempt to pass a resolution giving them the right to have their own independent state.

Bolton has direct ties to the Romney campaign, serving as an unpaid adviser that regularly appears at campaign events stumping for the presumptive GOP presidential nominee. “John Bolton insists on good results for America and is someone I respect,” Romney said in December. “I think he’s a fine man with great capacity.”

It is a well-known fact that the neo-conservatives were beyond the war in Iraq. The neo-conservatives, the Christian Right and the Judeo-Christian coalition dramatically affected Bush’s policy in the Middle East. They invented the lie that Iraq possesses weapons of mass-destruction and pushed Bush to launch his war against Ira. John Bolton known by his enmity to the Palestinians and Muslims in general was involved in such conspiracy.

Karen DeYoung, in Gen. Colin Powell’s biography, *SOLDIER: The life of Colin Powell*, has quoted Powell twice saying that “*the Iraq war was the product of Donald Rumsfeld’s absorption in the “JINSA crowd”*. BTW, Dick Cheney was on JINSA’s Board of Advisors before becoming vice president, where he was joined by Ledeen, Feith, Perle, James Woolsey, and John Bolton.

Hatred to Islam and Muslims has reached the Congress as well. Now we can see Senators attacking Islam without knowledge like Peter King, Allen West and Michele Backmann!

Barack Obama on the contrary adopts high diplomacy when talking about Islam and Muslims. In last September, 2012 in the United Nations Obama said, "The future must not belong to those who slander the prophet of Islam. But to be credible, those who condemn that slander must also condemn the hate we see in the images of Jesus Christ that are desecrated, or churches that are destroyed, or the Holocaust that is denied. Let us condemn incitement against Sufi Muslims and Shiite pilgrims."

Obama also added, "It's time to heed the words of Gandhi: 'intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit.' Together, we must work towards a world where we are strengthened by our differences, and not defined by them. That is what America embodies, that's the vision we will support."

John Bolton, the arch conservative, derided Obama for "moral equivalence" for allegedly suggesting that the anti-Islam film was equally as offensive as the killings that followed it.

"It was like a great big warm fuzzy blanket. The president comes out in favor of tolerance. There's your breaking news," Bolton told Fox News. "The problem with the speech was that it was infused with the fallacy of moral equivalency – that there's sort of extremism and intolerance everywhere and it's all the same." This statement showed clearly how Bolton is biased against Muslims.

On Center for Security Policy president Frank Gaffney's radio show, Mitt Romney foreign policy adviser John Bolton defended Rep. Michele
that

Recently, Rep. Michele Bachmann sent letters to the State Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security asking them to investigate American Muslim organizations, individuals and government employees to determine if they are infiltrating the government and sabotaging it from within. The Republican Senator Newt Gringrich who announced early this year that the Palestinians are an "invented people" wrote an op-ed defending Bachmann's request.

Bachmann and her friends -- Republican representatives Trent Franks of Arizona, Louie Gohmert of Texas, Tom Rooney of Florida and Lynn

Westmoreland of Georgia -- pulled out all the stops. They not only hurled outrageous claims at Muslim organizations, but also accused Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's deputy chief-of-staff of being part of the conspiracy.

Rep. Michele Bachmann apparently in need of some attention has launched some sort of paranoid inquiry into whether the U.S. Congress has been infiltrated by the Muslim Brotherhood. Some weeks ago, Bachmann sought the assistance of inspectors general in the State, asking them to Homeland Security, Defense and Justice Departments, potential "policies and activities that appear to be the result investigate of influence operations conducted by individuals and organizations associated with the Muslim Brotherhood."

Bachmann went to the extent of accusing Human Abedin as Muslim brotherhood infiltrator! Anderson Cooper, the primary anchor of the CNN news, and Howard Dean, politician and physician from Vermont stated that Backmann has never had commands of the fact (13).

A few Republicans have rallied to Abedin's side. This week, Ed Rollins, Bachmann's former campaign chief, denounced her in an op-ed on Fox News. Speaker of the House John Boehner defended Abedin's character. Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain felt compelled to stand on the floor of the Senate and denounce the accusations. "Ultimately, what is at stake in this matter is larger even than the reputation of one person. This is about who we are as a nation, and who we aspire to be," he said.

Haris Tarin the Director of the Washington DC Office of the Muslim Public Affairs Council said to CNN, "The question is whether this incident will serve as a tipping point. Every year, my organization brings 25 young American Muslim leaders to Washington to help them better understand policy making. The majority are inspired to develop careers in government and public service. Yet every year I ask myself: Are these individuals better off in banking, medicine and less high-profile careers? Am I exposing them to a career that will be tarnished by the likes of Michele Bachmann? In the end, I still believe that the sacrifice to serve this nation and make America a better place is worth the headache, and heartache, of dealing with bigots -- including those in Congress.

Will Mitt Romney be fair enough to push back against Islamophobes whose clear agenda is to marginalize American Muslims? Will he expose this wave of McCarthyism, condemns and makes politically unacceptable? Will American Muslim public servants be able to serve

their country without suspicion? Will he be able to reconcile between Muslim and non-Muslim Americans by turning the table over the heads of these hate mongers who had already spread dissension and discord in the American society? I doubt it very much.

On the opening night of the Republican National Convention, the cameras caught former UN ambassador John Bolton in the Romney family box, chatting amiably with Romney's son Tagg. Shortly before the convention, Bolton rushed to the defense of Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, whose attempts to tie Hillary Clinton aide Huma Abedin to the Muslim Brotherhood were widely denounced, even by Republicans like John McCain.

Several weeks before the convention, Romney met in Denver with former Army lieutenant general Jerry Boykin, who was rebuked by President Bush in 2003 for his anti-Muslim Crusade-like statements while still in uniform and subsequently found by the Pentagon Inspector General to have violated three internal rules when he delivered these speeches without clarifying that he was speaking in his private capacity. Boykin's war cry of "no mosques in America" and rejection of First Amendment rights for statements in support of Islam led to his withdrawal as a West Point speaker this year, after protests by Iraq and Afghanistan vet groups. Boykin recently became executive vice president of the Family Research Council, a measure of how Islamophobia has become an integral part of the hard-right agenda.

The Romney campaign's foreign policy team of advisers is flooded with neocons from the Bush era, including Robert Joseph, the National Security Council official who, as Ari Berman reported in *The Nation*, inserted the famous "sixteen words" in Bush's State of the Union address in 2003 claiming that Iraq tried to buy enriched uranium from Niger. Romney's top national security adviser since 2007 is Cofer Black, the former Black water executive and CIA official who ran the "extraordinary rendition" torture program. Sheldon Adelson, the billionaire Super PAC donor for Romney, says "all the terrorists are Islamists."

This is the context surrounding Romney's most recent expedition into Middle East policy. A Washington Post editorial echoed by MSNBC's Chris Matthews pointedly raised the question of why Romney failed to condemn the fourteen-minute trailer, "Innocence of Muslims," during his Wednesday press conference, though it ostensibly triggered the embassy attacks in Egypt and elsewhere. His campaign later issued a muted criticism of "the reported message of the movie." Finally, this morning, he said the "whole film is a terrible idea," and that "making it,

promoting it, showing it, is disrespectful to people of other faiths,” a statement it took him four days after the furor began to make.

The fact is that the film emerged from the same Islamophobic circles that celebrate Bolton and Boykin, and are now backing Romney. The 2011 permit to make the movie was granted to Media for Christ, a nonprofit that shares space with The Way TV, and both are headed by an Egyptian Christian named Joseph Nassralla Abdelmasih.

Nassralla was a celebrated speaker at the September 11, 2010, and September 11, 2011, rallies in New York to oppose the Park51 Islamic center (the so-called “Ground Zero mosque”) that were organized by renowned anti-Muslim bloggers Pam Geller and Robert Spencer, who even the Anti-Defamation League has accused of “promoting a conspiratorial anti-Muslim agenda under the pretext of fighting radical Islam.” Bolton delivered a ten-minute videotaped address at the 2010 rally, introduced by Geller as her candidate for president in 2012. Nassralla declared that they would build the mosque “on my dead body,” derided the Koran as “not holy” and raised over his head a picture of the bloody corpse of a Coptic Christian friend of his who he said was killed by Muslims, telling the audience “you don’t have to be like this.”

Spencer introduced Nassralla at the rally as a prized thumb in the eye of the media, since Keith Olbermann and others had made much of the fact that Nassralla and an associate had been mistaken as Muslims at the Geller/Spencer group’s June rally and nearly assaulted, escorted out by the NYPD. “I’m a Christian,” a sweating Nassralla was reported to have yelled in his defense, though he was shoved and his camera was knocked out of his hand. Shortly after the incident, Nassralla confirmed the news accounts of this episode to Rightwing News, but he later toned it all down and became a Geller/Spencer property at rallies. Nassralla was even scheduled to be a speaker at the first national conference on Sharia law in Nashville last year, where Geller, too, was scheduled to be the top headliner but cancelled after a hotel there refused to host it. David French, the head of Evangelicals for Mitt, was a speaker at the same conference.

Bolton, who has campaigned repeatedly with Romney, is so close to Geller and Spencer that he wrote the foreword to their 2010 book, *The Post-American Presidency: The Obama Administration’s War on America*, and has done several interviews with Geller, cozily discussing Middle East policy in couch videos. Geller, for her part, praised Romney’s meeting with “war hero” Boykin as “a sign that Romney will pursue a realistic and patriotic policy of resisting global jihad and

Islamic supremacism.” Geller, who says she “loves” Paul Ryan, contends that “the campaign is clearly defined” between “Anti-American vs. pro-American.” Morris Sadek, another Coptic Christian, whose Arabic blog about the trailer is widely seen as having generated Egyptian interest in it, also appeared at Geller/Spencer rallies, and is associated with Nassralla.

Between the Geller/Spencer rallies in June and September 2010, Mitt Romney joined their campaign against the Manhattan Islamic center, issuing a statement opposing it in part because of “the potential for extremists to use the mosque for global recruiting and propaganda,” almost precisely what Boykin and Bolton were saying at the time. The Romney position on the mosque controversy, derided in a Boston Globe editorial as directly contrary to his Mormon speech in the 2008 campaign, now appears inconsistent with his ongoing commentary on the embassy attacks. He became a fulsome backer of filmmaker rights at his press conference, declaring “we will also defend our constitutional right of speech and assembly and religion.” (14).

Conclusion

Based on the above, my personal opinion is that Obama will win a second term. However, this prediction remains to be seen. I base the general conclusion however, on the reports of the political experts, reporters, and journalists who meticulously analyzed the results of Obama’s debates with Mitt Romney. The following is their analysis and comments:

It was clear to the observers that Mitt Romney was changing his position every time he addressed them. During Monday night's debate, Romney largely expressed agreement with how Obama has conducted U.S. foreign policy. He dramatically shifted his position and agreed with the president that all U.S. forces should be out of Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Romney previously had criticized Obama for setting such a date for withdrawal, saying he was giving the Taliban insurgency and its al-Qaida allies a date after which the militants could begin a drive to retake the country. Romney also dropped the conditions he had set for troop withdrawal.

Romney even congratulated Obama "on taking out Osama bin Laden and taking on the leadership of al-Qaida," but he added, "We can't kill our way out of this mess. ... We must have a comprehensive and robust strategy." He did not offer specifics.

Obama's campaign released a 20-page booklet called the "Blueprint for America's Future" on Tuesday to promote a second-term agenda, responding to Republican criticism that the president has not clearly articulated a plan for the next four years. The plan includes spending more on education, boosting manufacturing jobs and raising taxes on the wealthy.

Obama criticized Romney, "Mitt Romney is doing everything he can to hide his true positions. He is terrific at making presentations about stuff he thinks is wrong with America, but he sure can't give you an answer about what will make it right. And that's not leadership you can trust."

Obama also said, "Mitt Romney doesn't really create jobs. His deficit plan doesn't reduce the deficit; it adds to it."

A Washington Post/ABC News poll last week showed 55 per cent of likely voters said Obama is "honest and trustworthy" compared to 47 per cent who felt that way about Romney.

Reference: Obama, Romney head to key battleground states; Obama highlights second term agenda. By: Associated Press, The Associated Press. Edmonton Journal.

Candidate Romney would have us believe Obama has accomplished nothing, but in fact President Obama has one of the most history making legislative records since FDR. The Washington Monthly lists just 50 of President Obama's top accomplishments.

Harlan Green counted the achievements of President Obama during his four years in the White House:

"We could start with Obama care, or the Affordable Care Act, which no other president was able to enact, or ARRA, the \$787 trillion stimulus that funded \$100 trillion in infrastructure improvements alone and supported state public service employment (police, first, etc.), or doubling fuel efficiency of autos, or cutting nuclear weapon inventories of Russia and the U.S, or passage of Dodd-Frank financial regulation, and so on.

In fact, he has scored successes in almost every sector of our society -- universal health care, nuclear disarmament, energy conservation, education, financial regulation, consumer protection, job creation, and even housing -- in spite of the record number of Senate Republican filibusters."

But more importantly, Obama has in fact reversed the greatest recession since the Great Depression with his economic policies and job creation programs. Yes, his so-called 'Keynesian' stimulus programs include recapitalizing banks, and a structured bankruptcy that brought back Chrysler and GM, thus saving one million jobs. And ARRA is credited with saving up to 3.5 million jobs, by the way.”

This won't satisfy Romney-Ryan supporters; of course, who believe only way to prosperity is to reduce taxation of the wealthiest. But it has never worked. GW Bush's tax cuts and borrowed money created just three million jobs in his eight years, versus the claimed five million-plus jobs under Obama to date.”

And it can't work. Why? The wealthiest have for the most part hoarded their wealth -- first paying themselves, then parking much of it overseas in tax havens, or investing in other countries. They have been increasing their share of our economic pie since the 1970s, creating the greatest inequality of income and opportunity since 1928.”

Chrystia Freeland's history of the wealthiest, *Plutocrats, The Rise of the New Global Super-Rich and The Fall of Everyone Else*, documents just how wealthy the wealthiest have become at the expense of everyone else, as she says. Just in the first year 2009-2010 of this economic recovery, for instance, 93 percent of income gains went to the top 1 percent while the top 0.01 percent gained an average \$4.2 million per household.

And now we know inequality is bad for growth and our position in the world. A recent IMF study by Andrew Berg and Jonathan D. Ostry suggests such inequality might shorten our economic expansion by one-third in jobs lost and goods products:

A careful look at the varying levels of inequality in different countries demonstrates just how much societal divides in wealth really matter. Countries with high inequality are far more likely to fall into financial crisis and far less likely to sustain economic growth." We actually know more than that. British sociologist Richard Wilkinson has studied inequality and written extensively about it. Countries with the greater inequality have higher rates of poverty, violence (30,000 gun deaths per year in the U.S., one million over the last four decades), prisons per capita, and lower levels of health and education.

So in fact, inequality is more a symptom of third-world status than being world's superpower. In *The Spirit Level*, he and Kate Pickett document the damage that inequality brings to societies.”

In the case of the U.S., it will mean a decline from being the world's only superpower, as the plutocrats garner even more wealth for themselves, and less for the benefit of a stronger democracy. It is a sad story, but can be reversed. Only investments in healthcare, education, research and development in new technologies that Obama advocates will strengthen our democracy.” (15).

It's easy to stand outside the White House and hurl complaints at the president for all he has done wrong without considering all he has faced, and what he has accomplished. Few other presidents in American history have guided a nation through extraordinarily difficult circumstances as gracefully as Barack Obama.

The system of government does not lend itself to easy achievement, particularly in the face of the inflexible partisan rule the Republican controlled congress has inflicted on President Obama. But despite that, he has managed to stop the bleeding in the economy handed to him from his predecessor, Republican George W. Bush.

President Obama has not had enough time to erase all the damage from the previous administration, but we are definitely heading in the right direction. Four years ago, America was dangerously close to leading the world into a depression. Today, under Barack Obama's leadership, the crisis is behind us.

I can't help but wonder how much more President Obama could have accomplished if Congress had not been so dead-set against allowing him any level of success. Those opponents have attempted to paint President Obama as un-American and unpatriotic, but reality says otherwise. Instead of questioning the patriotism of the president, one should question the patriotism of the members of Congress who placed party ideology and political gamesmanship ahead of governing in the best interests of the people who elected them and put the nation at risk in the process.

America has a dedicated ally in Barack Obama, who has used his power to defend and promote the success of all Americans regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, immigration status, and income level. In doing so, he has supported the melting pot that formed this nation and has kept it strong.

Unlike Mitt Romney, Barack Obama supports a woman's right to choose what happens to her body, and has succeeded in moving the country one step closer to making health care a right, instead of a privilege reserved only for those with cash or a good insurance policy.

Social issues are economic issues, and Barack Obama understands how the real world lives far better than his out-of-touch, millionaire CEO opponent, Mitt Romney.

Many have said this election is more important than others and I believe they are correct. There is a stark contrast between the political, social, and economic views of Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, not the least of which is fundamental character.

Mitt Romney has been widely criticized for changing his positions on issues, refusing to reveal a history of tax returns, as Barack Obama and other presidential candidates have, and lacks the ability to give the American people a detailed explanation of his mathematically challenged economic plan.

Now imagine a foreign leader trying to negotiate a plan to avoid nuclear war or some other disaster with Mitt Romney, who already has a reputation for being a man of many secrets who does not keep his word. How do you suppose that would go?

Steadiness earns trust, and trust is required to give America credibility in both domestic and foreign affairs. On trust, Multiple-personality-Mitt has already missed the bus, or should I say limo?

Barack Obama has driven America toward peace and prosperity, and has earned a second term to take the next steps forward. Moreover, Obama can and will protect the country from Mitt Romney, whose only stated goal is to dismantle our social safety nets and distribute the proceeds into the pockets of his fellow Wall Street millionaire friends.

Mr. Romney is a CEO with all the skills of a masterful salesman. But that does not make him qualified to be President of the United States.

Barack Obama understands far better than Mitt Romney that America is not about reaching the bottom line, it's about raising it.

The neoconservatives who were behind war in Iraq have signed on as foreign policy advisers for Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney. He is now strongly denouncing Obama as an abject failure, intent on appeasing the world's dictators. Romney, who has scant foreign policy experience, is now championing a new "American Century," featuring a pre-emptive foreign policy agenda, a \$2-trillion increase in the Defense budget and, most likely, hostilities with Iran — not to mention skirmishes with China and Russia.

Ever since these once hawkish centrist Democrats denounced President Jimmy Carter and signed on with Ronald Reagan in 1980, they have sought a president who would carry out their grandiose dreams: giving Israel carte blanche and exporting democracy, by force if necessary, around the globe. In George W. Bush they found him—a credulous president who denounced an axis of evil.

But with the Iraq war, their doctrines became discredited until the very word “neocon” morphed into a term of abuse. Now, however, these unrepentant ideologues are seeking another chance to promote their militant doctrines – and have discovered a fresh champion in Romney.

Romney recently praised former Vice President Dick Cheney as a “person of wisdom and judgment.” For his advisers are a phalanx of neoconservatives who actively worked with Cheney in the George W. Bush administration.

Yet, for all Romney’s skill at turning around faltering businesses, this neo-con attack on the Obama foreign policy looks like one enterprise that is bound to fail. Instead of reviving his campaign, Romney’s embrace of the neocons is sabotaging it. Romney may be good for the neocons – but they are not good for him.

Neocons who have clambered on board the Romney campaign include Bush administration officials Dan Senor, who served as spokesman for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq; John Bolton, a former ambassador to the United Nations, and Elliott Abrams, a former deputy national security adviser for global democracy.

The neocons in the Romney camp appear to be focused on blanket support for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and confrontation with Russia, China and, above all, Iran.

Abrams, writing in the Weekly Standard, for example, declared that Congress should pass a resolution authorizing the use of military force against Iran. Senor said on CBS’ “This Morning” last month that America “looks impotent” because Obama has failed to topple Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Both Abrams and Senor are also giving Republican vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan, who recently decried Obama’s absence of “moral clarity” in foreign affairs, a neocon buffing.

Yet Romney’s adoption of the neocons could be boomeranging. During the former Massachusetts governor’s maladroit trip abroad this summer, Senor declared in Israel, “If Israel has to take action on its own, in order to stop Iran from developing that capability, the governor would respect that decision.”

The Romney camp ultimately had to walk back this provocative statement. But Romney, who declared in his infamous behind-closed-doors video that the Palestinians have “no interest” in peace, presumably believes in it.

Overall, Romney would be better-served if he listened to the few establishment advisers in his camp, including Robert Zoellick, former deputy secretary of state and World Bank head, who, not surprisingly, is loathed by the neocons for his reasoned approach to foreign policy. Zoellick is also castigated as a protégé of former Secretary of State James Baker, the neocon bogeyman because of his criticism of Israel’s West Bank settlements.

There are no signs, however, that Romney is seriously deviating from neocon orthodoxy (16).

In caricaturing Obama, who has pursued a prudent and cautious course in foreign policy, Romney is providing further evidence that he is living in the past by endorsing the failed policies of the Bush administration.

Romney would likely mire the U.S. in new and unpopular wars in both the Middle East and Asia.

Whether Romney as president would actually pursue the neo-con piffle he’s been touting is an open question. But given that 17 of 24 of his top foreign policy advisers served in the Bush administration, as Foreign Policy noted, it would be a big gamble to bet against it.

Romney as president, for example could face uproar in his own ranks if he tried to restrain Israel from attacking Tehran. He may discover that the only thing the neocons are essentially loyal is their malarkey about reinventing the Middle East overnight.

So, if Obama defeats Romney would the neocons finally disappear? Not a chance.

Their policies may have led to catastrophe in the Middle East, but they have become a permanent part of the Washington establishment. They now have sturdy perches at the American Enterprise Institute, Fox News and the Weekly Standard, among others.

Instead of folding their collective foreign policy tents, the neocons will likely latch onto a fresh candidate, like Paul Ryan or Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) to espouse their credo in 2016.

It’s not as if the neocons are actually making a comeback. They never really left (17).

Jack Herwick wrote: “I am worried sick that there aren’t enough Americans paying close enough attention to what’s going on and could end up putting Romney in the White House. How can a politician who

has lied and flip-flopped on all issues be seriously considered as our President?

What really worries me is how few Americans (and this isn't true outside our borders) realize just how bad Bush's 8 years were for this country, both domestically and internationally. If more than half of the US thinks Bush was a tolerable President, what hope is there for the future? Bush was probably our worst President."

6 months into the Iraq War I saw a poll that said 70% of Americans believed that Saddam Hussein was behind the 9/11 attacks. As my cousin said to me at the time (he was about 45 then), "Everyone knows Saddam Hussein was behind the 9/11 attacks." In other words, the United States of America went to war and the majority of its people didn't even correctly know why. What's even worse, people today don't realize just how bad of a thing that is. We're just blundering on like the Iraq War was a reasonable war to fight, and that going from surpluses to record deficits to the worst economic crash since the Great Depression was just something to shrug your shoulders about, while scratching your head wondering why Obama hasn't made everything groovy again. It's the same attitude toward global warming. What global warming?"

We've become a nation of Alfred E. Newmans: "What, me worry?" This is the only reason someone with the questionable character and failed proposals like Romney can have a serious shot at becoming our President. I'm afraid that even if Obama wins it's only going to slow down our race toward the rightwing cliff. What's going to happen to stop the propaganda and the brain-rot that has infected this country?

A couple of weeks ago, while on Meet the Press, Peggy Noonan offered some advice to Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney. Romney, she said, "has to kick away from and define himself against what happened for the eight years of George W. Bush's presidency." I couldn't agree more.

As Noonan rightly observes, not only did Bush's tenure culminate in "economic collapse;" it presided over "two long, frustrating wars that people think were not won." Romney, Noonan insists, must resist his opponents' efforts to depict him as determined to "bring that stuff back." Indeed.

To hear the Republican pundits of talk radio and Fox News tell it, one could be pardoned for thinking either one of two things. One sufficiently reasonable inference we can draw is that the Bush presidency was not an unqualified betrayal of everything that these very same "conservative"

pundits claim to affirm. The other — the only other — proposition left for us to conclude is that the eight years of Bush never occurred.

But the hard, ugly fact of the matter is that the Bush presidency most certainly did occur. And for as memory-impaired as Americans tend to be, they remember it.

This, though, isn't as surprising as it may sound. In fact, with Bush supporters such as Bill Bennett — one of Noonan's interlocutors on Sunday — rehashing the same talking points that figured so prominently for the better part of a decade, it would be surprising if Americans hadn't yet recovered completely from their Bush fatigue.

Bennett asserted that we shouldn't "throw out" the entirety of Bush's presidency, for the 43rd president "did a lot of fine things." Predictably — incredibly? — the only example of such "fine things" that Bennett offered was that of the Iraq War. "We won the war in Iraq," he declared definitively.

Now, whether Bennett's judgment is accurate or not is not the issue. The point is that very few Americans think that Bennett and his ilk are correct on this score. And of those who sympathize with his position, most don't believe that the blood, time, and treasure our country invested in Iraq was worth it.

But it isn't just Bennett who reminds voters of the Bush years. From talk radio and Fox News personalities to politicians such as John McCain, Rick Santorum, and Mitt Romney himself, Republicans, whether inadvertently or otherwise, do so as well.

Whenever Republicans accuse President Obama of being an "appeaser" or of "leading from behind" on the world stage, they remind voters of just how belligerent Bush's foreign policy really was.

Bear in mind, Obama was responsible for "the surge" of some 30,000 troops in Afghanistan. He deployed soldiers to Libya to assist rebels in overthrowing Moammar Gadhafi, and invaded Pakistan to have Osama bin Laden assassinated. Obama has also arranged for repeated drone attacks on al-Qaeda terrorists in this same country. In other words, Obama is no dove. He could never credibly be mistaken for a pacifist or even a non-interventionist.

Republicans know this. While they blast him for being weak on foreign policy, they also describe his policies as being a continuation of those of Bush! They further concede that Obama is not an "appeaser" when they blast him for deliberately revealing to the media such national security related secrets as the drone attacks that he has authorized.

When Republicans say that Obama is weak on national defense and foreign policy, what they can all too easily be interpreted as saying is that they do indeed want to “bring that stuff back” from the Bush years, to use Noonan’s words. Actually, if Obama’s policies are continuous with those of Bush, but Obama is too weak, then it would appear that Republicans want an agenda that is more aggressive than Bush’s. This is all worth bringing up. Yet it is especially worthwhile doing so in the immediate aftermath of the American embassy attack that unfolded on our second 9/11 in Libya. This latest event has thrust the issue of foreign policy to the forefront of an election season that has thus far involved relatively little talk of anything other than the economy. Romney has come out forcefully against Obama’s response, in so many words repeating the Republican refrain of weakness against the latter. Romney has been no less forceful in condemning the murderous rioters who stormed the embassy.

As long as both campaigns remain focused on domestic considerations, chances are good that the Romney family will be moving into the White House at the beginning of next year. Even foreign policy discussions don’t have to be excluded from the Romney agenda — as long as the former Massachusetts governor focuses our attention upon Obama’s failed promises in this arena.

But if Romney insists on promoting his current strategy of depicting Obama as weak and timid with respect to America’s relations with the Middle East, then he supplies the president with a golden opportunity to invoke the specter of George W. Bush’s America. And this is just what Obama did this past Sunday, September 23.

During a 60 Minutes interview, Obama touched upon a topic that, if pursued, could very well hand him an election victory come November. In response to Romney’s objections against his approach to Syria and Iran, the president responded simply: If Romney “is suggesting that we should start another war,” Obama said, “he should say so.”

This is the last thing that any Republican should want. A Republican that isn’t a neoconservative ideologue will not want for Americans to be reminded of President Bush’s foreign policy. In fact, he will want nothing more than for his compatriots to forget all about Bush’s designs to remake the Islamic world in the image of some democratic ideal. The problem is that the neoconservative foreign policy that dominated during Bush’s two terms in office isn’t just one policy option among others. It is the cornerstone of neoconservative ideology. And, in spite of

its wild unpopularity with the American electorate, neoconservative ideology remains the ideology of the Republican Party.

So, while Republicans will stop at nothing to compromise on virtually every conceivable issue, they resolutely refuse to compromise on the one issue — foreign policy — that cost them both chambers of Congress in '06, and the presidency in '08. Romney should avoid like the plague the drawing of comparisons between Bush and himself.

There are two reasons for this. First, the country has had war fatigue since the Bush era. The average American neither understands nor appreciates why his government insists upon deploying his resources in blood and treasure in the Middle East.

It isn't necessarily that the average American is ignorant of the line that Bush and his supporters have tirelessly pushed in the service of this end. He may very well know all about our last president's determination to remake the Islamic world in the image of some democratic ideal. And he may know equally well that, by Bush and his supporters' lights, only if such a project comes to fruition can Americans bet on achieving "national security."

The average American knows what the neoconservatives believe. He just can't believe that anyone can seriously believe it. Yet his incredulity gives way to fear once this belief becomes our nation's foreign policy. This fear in turn becomes paralyzing at the thought that this foreign policy should be resurrected with a vengeance in the event of a Romney victory.

The second reason that Romney should emphatically disavow all comparisons between himself and the neoconservative Bush is a bit more theoretical. Still, theory intersects straight through practical politics on this score. Simply put, both morally and intellectually, there is a glaring inconsistency between calls for a more "limited" government, on the one hand, and, on the other, a more robust foreign policy. A more robust foreign policy, after all, requires a more robust military.

Yet the United States military is the federal government. What this means is that the larger the military, the larger must be the federal government of which it is a part. In turn, this implies that everything that can be said against big government can just as easily — and inescapably — be said against big military.

For example, if big government is financially unsustainable, as Romney and Republicans continually tell us, then, because big military is big government, a big military is financially unsustainable. More tellingly, if

big government is a betrayal of the liberty-centered ethical vision of America's founders, then big military is as well.

Indeed, no Republican should want for Americans to be reminded of neoconservative foreign policy this election year. The one Republican who should desire this least of all is Mitt Romney (18).

Oct 22 (Reuters) - The neoconservatives who rebuffed the Republican establishment's warnings about the perils of war in Iraq have now opened another front -against President Barack Obama.

They have signed on as foreign policy advisers for Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney. He is now strongly denouncing Obama as an abject failure, intent on appeasing the world's dictators. Romney, who has scant foreign policy experience, is now championing a new "American Century," featuring a pre-emptive foreign policy agenda, a \$2-trillion increase in the Defense budget and, most likely, hostilities with Iran - not to mention skirmishes with China and Russia.

Ever since these once hawkish centrist Democrats denounced President Jimmy Carter and signed on with Ronald Reagan in 1980, they have sought a president who would carry out their grandiose dreams: giving Israel carte blanche and exporting democracy, by force if necessary, around the globe. In George W. Bush they found him-a credulous president who denounced an axis of evil.

But with the Iraq war, their doctrines became discredited until the very word "neocon" morphed into a term of abuse. Now, however, these unrepentant ideologues are seeking another chance to promote their militant doctrines - and have discovered a fresh champion in Romney.

Romney recently praised former Vice President Dick Cheney as a "person of wisdom and judgment." For his advisers are a phalanx of neoconservatives who actively worked with Cheney in the George W. Bush administration.

Yet, for all Romney's skill at turning around faltering businesses, this neo-con attack on the Obama foreign policy looks like one enterprise that is bound to fail. Instead of reviving his campaign, Romney's embrace of the neocons is sabotaging it. Romney may be good for the neocons - but they are not good for him.

Neocons who have clambered on board the Romney campaign include Bush administration officials Dan Senor, who served as spokesman for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq; John Bolton, a former ambassador to the United Nations, and Elliott Abrams, a former deputy national security adviser for global democracy.

The neocons in the Romney camp appear to be focused on blanket support for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and confrontation with Russia, China and, above all, Iran.

Abrams, writing in the Weekly Standard, for example, declared that Congress should pass a resolution authorizing the use of military force against Iran. Senor said on CBS' "This Morning" last month that America "looks impotent" because Obama has failed to topple Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Both Abrams and Senor are also giving Republican vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan, who recently decried Obama's absence of "moral clarity" in foreign affairs, a neocon buffing.

Yet Romney's adoption of the neocons could be boomeranging. During the former Massachusetts governor's maladroit trip abroad this summer, Senor declared in Israel, "If Israel has to take action on its own, in order to stop Iran from developing that capability, the governor would respect that decision."

The Romney camp ultimately had to walk back this provocative statement. But Romney, who declared in his infamous behind-closed-doors video that the Palestinians have "no interest" in peace, presumably believes in it.

Romney, in his second presidential debate with Obama, flirted with disaster when he pointed to the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi to press the tired, and bogus, neocon line that Obama is a wuss when it comes to confronting terrorism.

Instead of engaging in a semantic debate about whether Obama described the attack as an "act of terror," Romney would have been wiser to attack Obama on the more substantive grounds of competence.

Overall, Romney would be better-served if he listened to the few establishment advisers in his camp, including Robert Zoellick, former deputy secretary of state and World Bank head, who, not surprisingly, is loathed by the neocons for his reasoned approach to foreign policy. Zoellick is also castigated as a protégé of former Secretary of State James Baker, the neocon bogeyman because of his criticism of Israel's West Bank settlements.

There are no signs, however, that Romney is seriously deviating from neocon orthodoxy.

So when Romney debates Obama on foreign policy on Monday night, he will likely be walking straight into a trap of his own making. Romney

wants to portray Obama—who approved the daring raid in Pakistan that killed Osama bin Laden—as a warmed-over Carter.

But in caricaturing Obama, who has pursued a prudent and cautious course in foreign policy, Romney is providing further evidence that he is living in the past by endorsing the failed policies of the Bush administration.

In the final debate Monday, Obama will surely pound home the theme that Romney would likely mire the U.S. in new and unpopular wars in both the Middle East and Asia.

Whether Romney as president would actually pursue the neo-con piffle he's been touting is an open question. But given that 17 of 24 of his top foreign policy advisers served in the Bush administration, as Foreign Policy noted, it would be a big gamble to bet against it.

Romney as president, for example could face an uproar in his own ranks if he tried to restrain Israel from attacking Tehran. He may discover that the only thing the neocons are essentially loyal is their malarkey about reinventing the Middle East overnight.

So, if Obama defeats Romney would the neocons finally disappear? Not a chance.

Their policies may have led to catastrophe in the Middle East, but they have become a permanent part of the Washington establishment. They now have sturdy perches at the American Enterprise Institute, Fox News and the Weekly Standard, among others.

Instead of folding their collective foreign policy tents, the neocons will likely latch onto a fresh candidate, like Paul Ryan or Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) to espouse their credo in 2016.

It's not as if the neocons are actually making a comeback. They never really left (19).

During his visit to Israel, Mitt Romney indicated that he was in favor of Israel taking on Iran in a preemptive manner, to stop them from proceeding on their race to a nuclear product. His statement encompassed nearly all Palestinian and Arabic nations. To be fair, Romney simply egged them on.

He is using his ignorance, and lack of cogent advice from his handlers, to attack President Obama on his handling of middle-eastern issues. The Libyan attack on our embassy comes first. Romney is trying to tell people that President Obama simply blew it, saying that our intelligence was not up to the task. Considering how the Taliban or Al Qaida work, using

protests to launch a strike on our embassy in Benghazi, Romney neglects to inform his supporters -- those who haven't abandoned him for taking on Big Bird -- that our efforts were focused upon the embassy in the Libyan capital of Tripoli, not the city in which the attack took place.

What difference does the truth or accuracy make, when Mitt Romney wants to attack the President? Not a single fact will guide Romney's campaign. Romney wants to fix blame; President Obama wants to fix problems.

The question has come up: How can we expect a person who lies so much in a presidential campaign, not to lie if he wins the presidency? Simple answer; we cannot.

So there is Mitt Romney, speaking at Virginia Military Academy, and pounding the drums of war, to future warriors. Who would expect them to walk out on this person? The main reason these young people attend VMI is to get a head start into the military. That Mitt Romney wants to kill a Big Bird so that he can add the 0.01% of the economy he has saved, to the defense budget is self-explanatory.

"Full of platitude and free of substance," former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright said in a teleconference call organized by the Obama campaign to rebut Mr. Romney's speech.

"How's he going to turn the page on the failed policies of the past if he wants to keep 20,000 troops in Iraq?" added Ben LaBolt, an Obama campaign spokesman.

"His position on Libya has no credibility since he's been both for and against our Libya policy," wrote Michelle Flournoy and Colin Kahl, Obama foreign policy advisers, in a memo to reporters.

President Obama wants to call Mitt Romney's bluff in foreign policies, by reminding the public that his administration brought down Kaddafi in Libya, ended the war in Iraq, is drawing down the troops in Afghanistan, and took out Bin Laden. The administration is also treading lightly in the mess that the Middle East has become, and that is in line with how the majority of Americans see the USA responding to the uprisings.

A comment to the above NY Times article was to the point:

Critical issues are at stake in a dangerous world. It would be wise for foreign policy dilettantes to keep their mouths shut and their flammable opinions out of the press while the seasoned pros work toward peace and

national security - with full understanding of the backgrounds and actual facts. Those currently dealing with foreign situations - from USA's commander-in-chief to assets in the field - are focusing on serious world diplomacy, not PR and opinion polls.

In fact, according to MSNBC, even GOP foreign policy experts are wary of Mitt Romney's so-called foreign policy stance. General Colin Powell's former chief of staff, when Powell was Secretary of State, "skewered Mitt Romney's foreign policy team on Monday, saying their policies make his stomach turn.

Wilkerson took particular aim at John Bolton, former President George W. Bush's ambassador to the United Nations--and now an adviser to Romney.

"The man scares me to death," Wilkerson, a retired U.S. Army colonel told MSNBC's Ed Schultz. "He would defeat all the enemies in America and the world--and believe me they're plentiful--and he'd do it with everyone else's blood. John is like Dick Cheney, never served a day in his life and wouldn't serve a day in his life " These people make me sick." Wilkerson's harsh rhetoric comes on the heels of Romney's foreign policy speech earlier in the day, in which the former Massachusetts governor laid out a hawkish approach.

Without much in the way of details -- a Mitt Romney signature -- he vowed to go after Iran, making sure they do not get a nuclear weapon, to pursue people who staged the attack on the embassy in Libya, and ensure that the rebels in Syria got the weapons they need, to topple their government.

Wilkerson's inclusion of John Bolton, the man who makes him sick, was clearly stated. Bolton, now an advisor to Romney, had been a policy advisor to Dubya, a well-known foreign policy expert " not!

If Romney can change his mind, so can this writer. We also covered the debate on October 11 between Joe Biden and Paul Lyin' Ryan.

Apparently even the review from Fox News, letting the world know that Ryan lied his way through his GOP Convention speech, was not enough to make Ryan rein in the lies he told in the debate. Joe Biden called a lot of what Ryan said Malarkey, and "stuff" and anyone who remembers George Carlin will know the meaning of that word.

Back to Romney's foreign policy chops. In another OpEdNews.com article, published on October 9, the author says:

"Last month our nation was attacked again," Romney said, referring to the September 11 attack on the Benghazi consulate. "Americans are asking how this happened, how the threats we face have grown so much worse, and what this calls on America to do. These are the right questions."

Romney made no effort to answer these "right" questions, not even trying to explain how any current threat was "so much worse" than the threat of nuclear annihilation at the peak of the Cold War.

Romney's argument is based in the implied analogy that suggests Field Marshall Erwin Rommel and the Nazi Afrika Korps in Libya and Tunisia, circa 1941-42, is somehow equaled in potency by the threat of a nameless Libyan terrorist cell whose compound was burned by unarmed Libyan civilians.

But that threat inflation was a necessary context for Romney's argument that President Obama's policies in the Middle East were inadequate. Contrasting himself with Obama's somewhat nuanced relations with both Israel and Iran, Romney indicated he'd take marching orders from Israel even if it meant marching on Iran.

It is so good of Romney to bring up the Nazis, as his party seems to be the logical successors to them, in their use of the Big lie: tell a lie big enough, loud enough, and often enough and soon, people will believe it.

Paul Ryan used that tactic in the Vice Presidential debate when, time after time, he lied to the public. Oftentimes, Vice President Biden called him on the lies, using the term malarkey; other times, the moderator asked Ryan for Details, for specifics. Ryan, however, never did give details or specifics.

The craziest thing was, at the end, when Martha Raddatz asked each man to tell the audience what distinguishes them from other people, Paul Ryan said one word, at the start: Honesty.

This writer thought that Joe Biden was going to come out of his chair but, to his credit, he simply looked astonished.

Turning back to Romney's speech to the students at VMI. The GOP Candidate made some -- to be kind -- misstatements; okay, so they are downright lies. Here is how William Boardman puts it:

When he said, "I will restore the permanent presence of aircraft carrier task forces in both the Eastern Mediterranean and the Gulf region," he ignored the fact that currently there is one such task force in the Eastern Mediterranean and two in the Persian Gulf.

When he said, "The size of our Navy is at levels not seen since 1916," he

ignored the fact that the Navy is currently at levels last seen in 2005-2006.

When he said, "I will roll back President Obama's deep and arbitrary cuts to our national defense," he ignored the reality that military spending is currently more than \$700 billion a year, an all-time high. When he said, "The President has not signed one new free trade agreement in the past four years," he ignored the fact that Obama has signed three, with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea.

Really, you have to ask yourselves, "Where does Romney get this stuff?" Is it possible that he makes it up as he goes along? Another article, published in OpEdNews.com (from DemocracyInAction.com), speculates that Mitt Romney is a psychopath. Gregory Paul says:

There is a psychological term for a person who is sufficiently lacking in guilt to sell a false line in a convincing manner. Psychopath. There is a very nice article about it in this month's Scientific American, "The Wisdom of Psychopaths." It explains that your socially functional psychopath (i.e. uses persuasion rather than violence in a social setting to con or convince the target, it's the most common variety) are so charismatic, egotistical, confident, focused, and especially low on remorse that they can readily manipulate many others. And that often makes them very successful.

And what class of successful persons are often psychopaths? Why business leaders. CEOs (20).

Russ Baker, also in OpEdNews.com, under the title to his latest article (from DemocracyInAction.com) said this:

How did we end up with a situation in which one of our two choices in November is a man who seems to know, or care, so little about the world? How is it possible that, with just weeks before the election, there is no dominant person or clique in Romney's camp to articulate a vision of what the United States can and should do in an incredibly complex and explosive world?

Think about it. Fewer than five full weeks to go, and there are still folks out there who are undecided. It is hoped that they will decide in favor of a fact-based presidential campaign, and that they have not waited too long to register to vote.

There is a saying: "Vote, as if your life depends upon it." It does (21).

The result is so far uncertain because the Americans in electing their presidents may not rely only on factual analysis of the achievements of their candidates, but also on unrealistic admiration of a certain nominee due to strong propaganda by the biased media.

Pro-Republicans are known to embark rashly in such matter. For example, they don't mind bringing to the White House a movie star such as Ronald Reagan, or Arnold Schwarzenegger as a governor, or even George Bush the son, the man who showed to the world the ugly face of America and ruined the American economy in jeopardy.

The Democrats however, were always able to introduce to the political arena the best candidates they have. They introduced Franklin Roosevelt who led the United States during a time of worldwide economic depression and total war, the only American president elected to more than two terms. He facilitated a durable coalition that realigned American politics for decades.

The Democrats also brought to the White House John Kennedy, who excellently managed the difficult events which happened during his presidency: the Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the building of the Berlin Wall, the Space Race, the African-American Civil Rights Movement, and early stages of the Vietnam War.

The Democrats brought to power Jimmy Carter the engineer of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. The man in his old age is still acting. With a fascinating smile on his face, he travels the developing world to spread democracy and be certain that freedom is implemented in its tenements.

The Democrats also introduced to the American presidency Bill Clinton, one of the best presidents America ever had. The Congressional Budget Office reported a budget surplus between the years 1998 and 2000, the last three years of Clinton's presidency. Clinton left the US treasury filled with a surplus of billions of dollars, then came the Republican George W. Bush to empty it to the ground! Clinton left office with the highest end-of-office approval rating of any U.S. president since World War II.

The Democrats then introduced Barak Obama as a presidential candidate against the Republican John McCain. In all their encounters and public debates McCain was not match to Obama. Introducing Obama as a promising presidential candidate against McCain showed clearly that the Democrats are wise and broad minded, for they didn't care about the colour of their candidate, or the religion of his father,

because they were confident that their candidate could extricate America from the huge debt Bush fettered America with, and that he will lead their nation to a brighter future.

References

- 1- Commentary: Romney's approach to China seems like overkill. By: E. Thomas McClanahan. The Kansas City Star.
- 2- Better Ways to Deal with China. BY; Edwardo Porter. Published October 23, 2012.
- 3- Obama versus Romney on Iran. By Trita Parsi. Truthout. October 23, 2012.
- 4- Obama & Romney on the issue of international trade. By John Tures.
- 5- Romney hits Obama on military cuts in new ad. By Jeremy Herb - 10/23/12 11:44 AM ET.
- 6- Romney on the challenges of the Arab Spring
By Brendan James | The Ticket – Mon, Oct 22, 2012.
- 7- Obama ad takes Romney remarks on Iraq and Afghanistan out of context. Posted by Glenn Kessler at 06:02 AM ET, 10/24/2012. TheWashingtonPost.
- 8- Most Americans want less foreign involvement, polls show. By: Paul Richter, Washington Bureau. October 25, 2012.
- 9- Palestinians: We were the 'elephant in the room' during Obama. Haaret.
- 10- Clash over US foreign policy. By: Anthony Manduca. The Sunday Times: October 28, 2012.
- 11- President Obama's Accomplishments | 3CHICSPOLITICO3chicspolitico.com/president-Obama's-accomplishments.
- 12- **The terrorism industry and overblown threats.** August 20, 2012 at 9:20 am. By: Mano Singham
- 13- **Reference: Michele Bachmann and Muslim witch hunts.** By Haris Tarin, Special to CNN. July 30, 2012.

- 14- Haris Tarin | Center for Religion & Civic Culture.
- 15- **Mitt Romney's Muslim-Baiting Backers.** By: Wayne Barrett. www.thenation.com.
- 16- **President Obama's Record Achievements.** By: Harlan Green.

- 17- Op-Ed: Why President Obama has earned a second term?
By:itobin53.Tampa: FL: US.
- 18- The neocons' war against Obama. By: Jacob Heilbrunn,
October 19, 2012.
- 19- Advice for Mitt Romney: Cast out Neoconservative Demons
Written by Jack Kerwick, Ph.D.
- 20- The neocon's war against Obama. By: Jacob Heilbrunn
- 21- Warrior or War Monger? By: Alex Howard