

Romney's Neocon Foreign Policy Plan

By [Prof. Lawrence S. Wittner](#)

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Presidential contender Mitt Romney has laid out his vision for a foreign policy in a Romney administration – and it looks like it could have been dreamt up by the same neocons who guided George W. Bush's disastrous pursuit of permanent U.S. military dominance.

If current polls are correct, Mitt Romney seems likely to become the 2012 Republican presidential candidate and, quite possibly, the next president of the United States.

Therefore, we should carefully examine his first major foreign and military policy address — delivered on Oct. 7 at the Citadel, in Charleston, South Carolina — and ponder the question: Is Mitt Romney ready for the world?

Romney began his speech with a heavy dose of fear. Iran, he warned, could well become “a fully activated nuclear weapons state, threatening its neighbors, [and] dominating the world’s oil supply.” Indeed, “Iran’s suicidal fanatics could blackmail the world.”

In Afghanistan, the Taliban might well “find a path back to power,” with the country sinking “back into the medieval terrors of fundamentalist rule.” Pakistan’s instability could end up placing nuclear weapons “in the hands of Islamic jihadists,” while “the malign socialism” of Venezuela and Cuba could “undermine the prospects of democracy” in Latin America.

Then, of course, there are the heavy dancers. China’s leaders could well take that nation down “a darker path, intimidating their neighbors, brushing aside an inferior American Navy in the Pacific, and building a global alliance of authoritarian states.”

And Russia might well “bludgeon the countries of the former Soviet Union into submission, and intimidate Europe with the levers of its energy resources.” Nor should people forget “Islamic fundamentalism, with which we have been at war since Sept. 11, 2001.”

Fortunately, though, there is help for a beleaguered world on the horizon.

“God did not create this country to be a nation of followers,” Romney explained. “America is not destined to be one of several equally balanced global powers.” Instead, “the United States should always retain military supremacy.”

As president, he would not “wave the white flag of surrender” but, rather, “devote” himself to building “an American century.” As he explained: “The twenty-first century can and must be an American century.” He would “not surrender America’s role in the world. . . . If you do not want America to be the strongest nation on earth, I am not your president.”

And how, exactly, would this American century be achieved? To provide the major pillar for

the new order, Romney would “reverse President Obama’s massive defense cuts.”

(The fact that there *were* no defense cuts during the Obama years — indeed, that Obama took office with an annual Defense Department budget of \$513 billion and, as of Sept. 30 of this year, had an annual Defense Department budget of \$530 billion, plus increased spending for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — seems not to have thrown Romney off stride.)

In the production of new U.S. warships alone, Romney promised to increase the annual number from nine to 15. He would also dramatically upgrade the (still unworkable) national missile defense system.

“In an American century,” he argued, America needed “the strongest military in the world.”

Of course, this military behemoth (currently costing almost as much as the military forces of all other nations combined) would have lots of work to do. In Afghanistan, for example, Romney would call a halt to plans for U.S. military withdrawal.

Meanwhile, he would “speak with our generals in the field, and receive the best recommendation of our military commanders” as to “the force level necessary to secure our gains and complete our mission successfully.” That might require a lot of troops, a lot of money, and a lot of time.

Throughout his address, Romney never acknowledged that, at least on occasion, U.S. foreign policy might have been plagued by faulty judgments or methods. Naturally, then, he did not mention the unnecessary Iraq war, the past U.S. support of Osama bin Laden, or other embarrassing ventures.

This assumption that the U.S. officials can never err — with the notable exception, of course, of the evil Barack Obama — is implicit in Romney’s promise that he would “never, ever apologize for America.”

Despite this nationalist emphasis, Romney did not entirely omit reference to the United Nations and other international institutions. But he discussed them in a very demeaning way.

“Too often,” he declared “these bodies prize the act of negotiating over the outcome to be reached. And shamefully, they can become forums for the tantrums of tyrants. . . . The United States must fight to return these bodies to their proper role.”

Nor did he see any reason to obey them — or the international law they represented — when it did not suit the U.S. government. He observed: “While America should work with other nations, we always reserve the right to act alone to protect our vital national interests.”

Romney’s speech was also noteworthy for the international issues he did *not* address. They included nuclear arms control and disarmament, global climate change, world health (such as the AIDS epidemic), and the tottering global economy.

Presumably he did not consider these important — or at least capable of being dealt with through the instrumentalities of a massive military buildup and an American century.

One wonders what citizens and statesmen of other nations think of this potential world leader who argues that his country is confronted everywhere by malignant enemies, must forever be militarily supreme, is exempt from following international law, can do no wrong, has been created by God, and must dominate the planet for the rest of this century.

Perhaps, in addition to questioning whether Romney is ready for the world, we should ask: Is the world ready for Romney?

Dr. Lawrence S. Wittner *is emeritus Professor of History at the State University of New York/Albany. His latest book is Confronting the Bomb: A Short History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement (Stanford University Press)*

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