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Obama betters Romney on foreign policy



By David Kilgour | David vs. David – Thu, 20 Sep, 2012

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The foreign policy strengths of incumbents and opposing candidates don't appear to have affected presidential election outcomes in recent decades. An exception was 1980, when Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter decisively in part because of their perceived strengths in dealing with Iran over American hostages who were then in Tehran.



Since 2008, Obama has promoted universal values internationally, maintained a largely hands-off approach towards ...

This might well explain why Romney is seeking to demonstrate that he'll stand up for America more vigorously than Obama. He is probably also mindful that in a July *New York Times*/CBS poll, 47% of Americans surveyed nationally said Obama would do a better job on foreign policy, whereas only 40% preferred Romney.

Since 2008, Obama has promoted universal values internationally, maintained a largely hands-off approach towards the Arab Spring, achieved some national security successes in Afghanistan and Libya, rid the world of Osama bin Laden, ended the war in Iraq, and pressed the Egyptian military to transfer power to a democratically elected president.

Relations with European countries are much improved largely because Obama listens. The same holds for Latin America, Africa, and Asia, except for China, where some of us think he has failed to assert human dignity and U.S. economic concerns effectively. If he wins the election, Romney pledges to name Beijing as a currency manipulator, which would no doubt restore some American manufacturing jobs. Obama should make a similar commitment.

Obama pays attention to the tone of his speeches even during crises. He did not politicize the recent crisis in North Africa and the Middle East as Romney did in his initial response. Anxious to build

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bridges with the Arab world, he sensibly admits that America is not always right. In his 2009 speech in Cairo, he stated, "No system of government... should be imposed on one nation by any other ...America does not presume to know what is best for everyone." Compared to that of George W. Bush, his is a much kinder and gentler foreign-policy. Many view him a prudent and steady international leader.

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America's ambassador to Libya and others were recently murdered in a raid on its consulate in Benghazi as anger erupted across the region over an obscure anti-Muslim film produced by a hate-inciting California filmmaker. With anti-U.S. protests wide-spread, Obama seeks to offer both compassion as president and resolve as commander in chief to protect Americans under siege. The continuing violence is challenging him to show that he still deserves confidence.

Romney promises a harder line in general. For example, on Russia, he says: "Under my administration... Mr. Putin will see a little less flexibility and more backbone." Earlier, he cited Russia as "our number one geopolitical foe", although the characterization ignores shared interests in reducing nuclear stockpiles, ending additional proliferation by Iran and North Korea and preventing nuclear material from falling into the hands of terrorists. Obama's 'reset' policy on Moscow has produced some cooperation in these issues, as well as Russian support for the Northern Distribution Network that supplies troops in Afghanistan.

Obama offers a steady hand in a dangerous period and accuses Romney of outsourcing policy to "neocon advisers", who would return to the thoughtless adventurism of the Bush administration. He positions the choice as being between "leadership... tested and proven" and a Republican team that is "new to foreign policy," with a worldview stuck in a "Cold War time warp."

Romney responds by listing Obama's foreign policy failures, which have "diminished American influence and compromised our interests and values": not containing Iran's nuclear ambitions; leaks of material on national security; damaging cuts in military spending; a damaged relationship with Israel; and a weak response to the civil war in Syria. He didn't add the failed Middle East peace negotiations and the chaotic situation in Afghanistan.

Yet Obama has delivered on a promise to end the Iraq war and has turned the nation's focus to counter-terrorism. Romney, he counters, believes that Russia — not Al Qaeda — poses the greatest peril to the United States and that ending the Iraq war was "tragic." Nor, he adds, has Romney offered a blueprint for winding down the war in Afghanistan.

In terms of influencing U.S. policies, Canada has unfortunately become almost irrelevant. Susan Rice, Obama's ambassador to the U.N., noted about her time in the Clinton administration: "For almost a generation, the U.S. has conducted foreign policy largely without regard to Canada's perspective." Consequently, while the Canada-U.S. relationship is intensive, its comprehensiveness means that even a small element of difficulty translates into many specific cases.

Although Obama's first foreign visit was to Canada, he doesn't appear to have a close personal relationship with Stephen Harper, who was clearly vexed, for example, by the president's decision to delay the Keystone pipeline. Governor Romney might have a cottage in Canada, but most Canadians appear to prefer Obama's foreign policy positions overall.

David Kilgour is co-chair of the Canadian Friends of a Democratic Iran and a director of the Washington-based Council for a Community of Democracies (CCD). He is a former MP for both the Conservative and Liberal Parties in the south-east region of Edmonton and has also served as the Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa, Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific and Deputy Speaker of the House.

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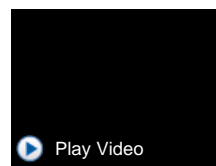


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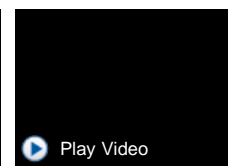


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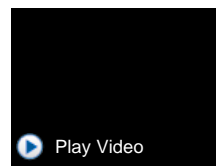
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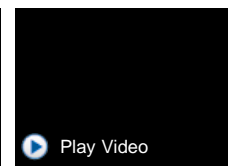
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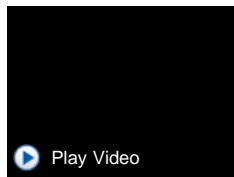
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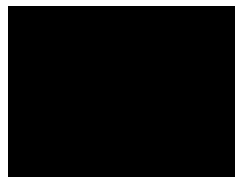
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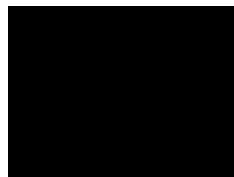
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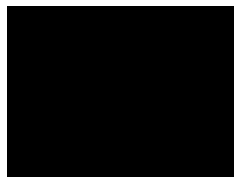
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when the elections are over the news media will have to go back to covering crap stories about nothing again.which i think exactly what they are doing now,they know more than the people do,hundreds of polls,and people who think they know everything and spew the same crap every night,

Right Arm • 5 days ago

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Because of Obama's methods of conducting foreign policy the world pays attention to him and doesn't dismiss him as an illiterate buffoon. Romney's views on foreign policy is the reason why the US is not liked in many parts of the world. As for China Obama doesn't publicize his efforts but pursues a quiet diplomcy. Obama does his homework whereas it appears that Romney does not.

Why would we be surprised that Obama and Harper don't have a close personal relationship; they're polar opposites. Heck, many of us Canadians don't like Harper either.

I'm sorry that Hilary Clinton decided to resign from being Secretary of State; she is an excellent representative for Obama and the US.

Redbird • 5 days ago

Romney has no charisma and he comes across as not well liked compared to Obama who jokes and smiles a lot,and knows how too work the crowds,saad to say a lot of people vote that way,who ever they like best,

Redbird • 5 days ago

Romney is finished,The democrats and Obama and news media keep on bashing him.We have to put up with this crap until after the election,Same old crap every day,romney losing,down in all the polls,terrible things Romney is saying,wont release 20 years tax returns,romney is a felon,okay we get it ,Obama wins Romney loses,now shut up,

RockyAndBullwinkle • 5 days ago

We now find out that Bush and Cheney and Rumsfeld knew more than they let on about 9/11 and they are traitors to America for starting a War in Iraq on fake evidence, killing

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millions of innocent people and thousands of soldiers... The troubles with Iran today are a product of mis-use of power in the Middle East by G.W.B... And now The Con Party wants another shot at runing the country by going back to the same policies that nearly caused a depression, and Romney is the guy at the wheel - With careless policy Romney advocates an attack on Iran, and he champions another 'Cold War' with Russia as if he is stuck in the last century! - This adventurism will lead no where good for the future of America - In November, STOP THIS DISASTER FROM HAPPENING !

Robert S • 5 days ago

Romney has (maybe) more money. But that's about all.

Mark • 5 days ago

President Obama will win a second term.....you all can cry till you die....lol

I AM CANADIAN! • 5 days ago

But Romney should still beat Obama in interstellar policy. After all his dady lives in Kola.

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Allen S • 7 days ago

Romney's attempt to undercut Obama in the middleast showed how little he knows about foreign policy matters. This is not the Reagan era and that kind of approach will not work in today's political environment.

I'm pretty sure he would have no idea how to deal with China and this is a huge problem looming in the background. The man has no tack and it shows every time he opens his mouth.

Rltheoret • 5 days ago

Romney showed his skill in foreign affairs when he travelled during his "Insult the World Tour".

A G • 7 days ago

Listening and speaking gently and persuasively often can achieve a lot more than tough talk.

With his calmness and respectfulness, Obama has raised the level of respect for USA around the world with the possible exception of the Middle East. It will take the return of Mohammed to achieve that.

Right Arm • 5 days ago

President Obama Falsely Claims Fast and Furious Program "Begun Under the Previous Administration"

Jake Tapper
ABC News
September 21, 2012

Asked about the Fast and Furious program at the Univision forum on Thursday, President Obama falsely claimed that the program began under President George W. Bush.

"I think it's important for us to understand that the Fast and Furious program was a field-initiated program begun under the previous administration," the president said. "When Eric Holder found out about it, he discontinued it. We assigned a inspector general to do a thorough report that was just issued, confirming that in fact Eric Holder did not know about this, that he took prompt action and the people who did initiate this were held accountable."

In actuality, the Fast and Furious program was started in October 2009, nine months into the Obama presidency.

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[Hairy](#) • 6 days ago

"Stand up for America" sounds scary when a Republican says it. I think that translates into women and children getting bombs dropped on them in foreign countries.

[Sim](#) • 5 days ago

US foreign policy priorities dictate to presidents more than the other way around. Doesn't really matter which of these two guys gets in.

[Gary](#) • 7 days ago

One could easily see "foot in mouth" Romney holster up the 6 shooters prior to starting diplomatic discourse and then say, "my way or the highway."
Romney is a complete idiot, a dunce and a buffoon.

[Gunslinger](#) • 7 days ago

One does not have to be #\$\$\$ voter to see that Romney was going to hit the pavement hard..With Romney's flip flopping views ,the USA would be in worse dire straights if Romney was elected as US President in November.Romney's latest blunder on his view of 47% of Americans are quote ' losers ' and do not help the USA even though they his fellow Americans.God help America and everyone else around the World if the likes of Romney were ever elected to power..How Romney ever can claim that he has made his millions all by himself is a ' joke '.Romney grew up ' rich ' and if it wasn't because of his father he would have "zilch ".

[Fatherantiquite](#) • 7 days ago

Obama does not bow to the jews

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