



INTERESTED PARTIES MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Passing the Commander-in-Chief Test

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Senator John Kerry, Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

A president has no higher responsibility than protecting our nation and its people. We live in a complicated world and need a leader who understands that complexity – and who has the right values to keep our country safe, promote our principles overseas, and confront the biggest challenges we face. In just 15 days, Americans will go to the polls to pick their Commander-in-Chief for the next four years.

We have that steady and strong leader today in President Obama. Mitt Romney, on the other hand, offers nothing but endless bluster and a record of dangerous blunders, failing at every turn to show he's up to the challenge. *In fact, Governor Romney has outlined fewer specific policies for how he would lead on national security issues than any presidential candidate in my memory.* He is an extreme and expedient candidate who lacks the judgment and vision so vital for the Oval Office, and he's at the top of the most inexperienced foreign policy ticket to run for president and vice president in decades.

It is astonishing that Romney has run for president for six years and never once bothered to put forward a plan to end the war in Afghanistan, for example, or to formulate a policy to go after al-Qaeda. Romney, who once even said "a president is not a foreign policy expert," appears unprepared to be either. It's even more astonishing that Governor Romney took a foreign policy trip overseas and failed to outline any policy – but managed to insult America's closest ally.

Tonight, Governor Romney will be asked to answer specific questions about what he would do differently to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, how he thinks he would do a better job of working with our allies and partners around the world, and how he can credibly claim he will stand up to China on behalf of American workers given his record of doing the opposite. Below are some of the more specific unanswered questions the American people should listen for tonight.

If Governor Romney wants to prove that he's ready to be the leader of the free world, he must, at a minimum, answer these questions in specific detail. If he fails to do so, he will once again have fallen short of the Commander-in-Chief threshold.

Question #1: How exactly would you finish the job against al-Qaeda, and what would you do differently than the President has done?

Remember: *Mitt Romney has failed to put forth any sort of policy whatsoever to go after those who continue to plot and train to kill Americans. We all remember he said that it was “not worth moving heaven and earth” to get the world’s most wanted terrorist, and declared that then-Senator Obama’s statements that he would take out al-Qaeda targets in Pakistan were “ill-considered.”*

Under President Obama’s leadership, we have devastated al-Qaeda’s leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Not only has the United States taken out Osama bin Laden, but we have devastated a large majority of al-Qaeda’s core group of leaders. And today our nation is safer because these terrorists have been eliminated. But there is still more work to do.

What Romney Needs to Answer: Would Romney continue the targeted counterterrorism operations that have been so successful under the Obama administration? What would he do differently? How would he go after al-Qaeda affiliates around the world? How would he increase and improve our partnerships with allies and key countries so they will work with us in this shared fight?

Question #2: *How will you end the war in Afghanistan?*

Remember: *Mitt Romney has failed to say how he would end the longest war in America’s history and bring our troops home.*

President Obama kept his promise to re-focus our efforts on the real reason we went to Afghanistan after 9/11 – to decimate al-Qaeda and prevent a return to the safe haven they had there. Now that we’re accomplishing those objectives, the President has a plan to end the war in 2014, and our troops are already coming home. After over a decade at war, the President has a plan to use the savings from ending the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to do some nation-building here at home.

What Romney Needs to Answer: After failing to even mention the war in Afghanistan in his convention speech, Romney now says he has to wait until he’s in office to put forward a detailed plan. Secret plans are no substitute for a strategy. It’s not just possible for a candidate to outline a specific plan to end the war, it’s expected: President Obama did it in 2008, when he said how he would get us out of Iraq. Tonight, will Governor Romney commit to ending the war in 2014, as outlined in the plan we, alongside our allies and partners, have in place today? Under what circumstances would he push back our end date from 2014? Would he keep troops on the ground, and, if so, how many and what would their mission be?

Question #3: *What will you do differently to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon?*

Remember: *Governor Romney has failed to say what he would do differently to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran.*

President Obama will not allow Iran to get a nuclear weapon, period. Because of the leadership and concrete steps he’s taken, Iran is under more pressure today over its nuclear program than at any time in history. The sanctions we’ve put in place – that the President led the international

community to put in place – are the toughest in history, and they’re crippling Iran’s economy. Its currency has fallen about 80 percent since 2011 as a result.

What Romney Needs to Answer: After months of dangerous bluster and saber-rattling, Governor Romney now says he agrees that the sanctions President Obama has put in place are working, yet he continues to be critical of the President’s policies. What exactly would he do differently? Does Romney believe there is still time for diplomacy to work? What does he mean when he says his red line is “nuclear weapons capability”? How does he define “capability”? Does he think it’s time to go to war?

Question #4: After months of reckless bluster on the campaign trail, how will you work with other countries around the world to achieve our national security objectives?

Remember: *Governor Romney managed to insult our closest ally in the world during his foreign trip, and he talks like he wants to return us to the go-it-alone policies of the previous administration. This cowboy diplomacy cost us the cooperation we needed from our allies and partners to confront serious threats.*

When President Obama took office, our relationships with our partners and allies around the world had been severely strained. A go-it-alone approach had isolated America instead of isolating our enemies. So the President made it a priority to rebuild those partnerships, and as a result, today America is stronger and more respected in the world. President Obama has built strong international coalitions to confront shared challenges like fighting the war in Afghanistan, supporting the Libyan opposition as they overthrew a dictator, imposing the toughest sanctions on Iran in history, and reducing the threat of nuclear weapons.

What Romney Needs to Answer: How would Governor Romney work with our closest ally in the world, the United Kingdom, if he couldn’t even get through a photo-op visit without insulting its leaders and its people? How would he work with the G-8 to continue helping the world recover from a deep global recession, when he’s talked negatively about nearly every member of the G-8 on the campaign trail? And how would Governor Romney get Russia and China on board with sanctions against Iran, when he blusters about both and pretends we’re still living in the Cold War?

Question #5: How will you get tough on China?

Remember: *Mitt Romney’s bluster on getting tough on China has no credibility, and his ideas have been widely criticized by Republicans and Democrats alike as irresponsible and bad for American businesses and workers.*

President Obama has consistently stood up to China on behalf of American workers and businesses, bringing more trade cases against China in four years than the previous administration did in eight. In every case that’s been decided, the Obama administration has won. The President also took aggressive action against China on behalf of American tire workers when it was flooding the market with Chinese tires, saving 1,000 jobs here at home as a result.

And our consistent pressure on the Chinese to allow their currency to appreciate has yielded results – its value has risen about 11 percent since 2010.

What Romney Needs to Answer: Would Romney really designate China a currency manipulator on day one of his presidency, even though Republicans like Senator Rubio and Speaker Boehner have said it's a bad idea that risks a trade war? Why is he now taking such a hardline on China, when in his recent book he called President Obama's actions "protectionism" for taking action against China to stand up for the American tire industry and its workers?

Question #6: What exactly would you have done in Libya?

Remember: *Mitt Romney has been all over the map on Libya – he both called for action in Libya and criticized the President for acting. He said we should've intervened in Libya sooner, then he ran down a hallway to duck reporters' questions, then he said the intervention was too aggressive, and then he said the world was a "better place" because the intervention succeeded.*

When Muammar Qadhafi threatened to attack and kill his own people, President Obama built and led an international coalition to stop an advancing army, prevent a massacre, and support the Libyan people as they overthrew a dictator. By working with our NATO allies and Arab partners, the President was able to accomplish this without putting American troops on the ground.

What Romney Needs to Answer: After taking so many conflicting positions, what exactly would Romney have done to protect the Libyan people? How does he square his contradictory positions that American intervention in Libya was at once too slow and too aggressive, or that he alternately said we should not have supported such a mission and then celebrated the removal of Qadhafi? Does he believe we should maintain a relationship with a free Libya going forward? And does Governor Romney agree with Congressman Issa's decision to release State Department cables that exposed the names of Libyans working with the United States on security and to fight extremism?

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