

RNC: McCain delivers classic neocon foreign policy speech

Written by Michael Hughes
Friday, 31 August 2012 18:49



John McCain at the Republican National Convention on Aug. 29, 2012. (Getty Images)

John McCain sounded like George W. Bush as he delivered a hawkish foreign policy sermon at the Republican National Convention on Wednesday night, attempting to garner votes via frothy emotional appeal as he tossed around worn platitudes and stale ideas.

McCain espoused the same interventionist gospel that has led to quagmires in Iraq and Afghanistan and has forced the U.S. to the brink of financial and spiritual bankruptcy.

Hopefully voters will see through the red meat the senator from Arizona cast about, which sounded like standard neoconservative fare, some of which was hard to take seriously:

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I trust Mitt Romney to know that good can triumph over evil, that justice can vanquish tyranny, that love can conquer hate, that the desire for freedom is eternal and universal, and that America is still the best hope of mankind.

McCain goes on to insinuate that voting for Barack Obama will amount to following a "declining path" toward a "dimmer and more dangerous" future.

McCain then says American voters have a choice and, supposedly, by choosing Mitt Romney the U.S. will be able to reform government, revitalize an ailing economy and "renew the foundations of our power and leadership in the world."

It's hard to imagine how Romney will revitalize the economy based on a math-defying plan that will cut taxes for the rich while increasing defense spending.

And Romney's idea of global leadership will soon have the U.S. on a war footing with Iran and Syria.

McCain slams the Obama administration's multilateralist bent and demands that we ignore Russia and China's UN Security Council vetoes and conduct war unilaterally.

He then is critical of Obama's Afghan timetable even though Romney largely agrees with it and bemoans, with a straight face somehow, the "devastating" defense cuts that will still leave the U.S. with a military budget larger than the rest of the world combined and six or seven times larger than our closest rival.

He then quotes Paul Ryan who once said that America's fiscal policy and foreign policy "are on a collision course."

Well, of course they are.

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The reality is America is in decline due to fiscal irresponsibility, imperial overreach and unnecessary defense spending.

With a \$15.9 trillion outstanding public debt and a baseline military budget of over \$700 billion, one can only pray the irony isn't lost on independent voters.

McCain also tugs at the patriotic heartstrings with the Bush battle cry of freedom:

But most of all, we can't afford to abandon the cause of human freedom.

When long-suffering peoples demand liberation from their jailers and torturers and tyrants, the leader of the free world must stand with them.

Republicans tend to forget that the "leader of the free world" also illegally executes suspected combatants — including American citizens — via unmanned drone strikes without due process and without properly recognizing civilian casualties.

The U.S. is also a country that routinely backs repressive regimes based on situational geopolitics and looks the other way when "long-suffering peoples" are being jailed and tortured.

Conor Friedersdorf puts it best over at the Atlantic:

But for John McCain, war is ennobling, and America's honor depends on flexing its military might.

It's a bellicose strain of national greatness conservatism that U.S. voters repudiated in 2008, having observed the huge chasm that separates neo-con predictions when they're urging war and the real world results after the wars they urge are launched.

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Sen. McCain is supposed to be mistrusted by real conservatives and beloved by independents, but Wednesday he delivered a speech that ought to terrify any independent who soured on George W. Bush.