

Set 1: point, mention, import, obvious, face, critic, situat, hand

Set 2: welfar, budget, capit, veto, educ, gain, child, centuri

Set 3: troop, afghanistan, iraq, strategi, qaida, succeed, general, war

Set 4: east, israel, middl, leadership, region, friend, peac, cours

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BARACK OBAMA Governor, the problem is, is that on a whole range of issues, whether its the Middle East, whether its Afghanistan, whether its Iraq, whether its now Iran, youve been all over the map. I mean, Im — Im pleased that you now are endorsing our policy of applying diplomatic pressure and potentially having bilateral discussions with the Iranians to end their nuclear program. But just a few years ago you said thats something youd never do. In the same way that you initially opposed a timetable in Afghanistan, now youre for it, although it depends. In the same way that you say you would have ended the war in Iraq, but recently gave a speech saying that we should have 20, 000 more folks in there. The same way that you said that it was mission creep to go after Gadhafi. When it comes to going after Osama bin Laden, you said, well, any president would make that call. But when you were a candidate in 2008, as I was, and I said if I got bin Laden in our sights I would take that shot, you said we shouldnt move heaven and earth to get one man. And you said we should ask Pakistan for permission. And if we had asked Pakistan permission, we would not have gotten him. And it was worth moving heaven and earth to get him. You know, after we killed bin Laden I was at ground zero for a memorial and talked to a young women who was four years old when 9/11 happened. And the last conversation she had with her father was him calling from the twin towers, saying “Peyton (ph) , I love you and I will always watch over you.” And for the next decade, she was haunted by that conversation. And she said to me, “You know, by finally getting bin Laden, that brought some closure to me.” And when we do things like that — when we bring those who have harmed us to justice, that sends a message to the world and it tells Peyton (ph) that we did not forget her father. And I make that point because thats the kind of clarity of leadership, and those decisions are not always popular. Those decisions generally — generally are not poll- tested. And even some in my own party, including my current vice president, had the same critique as you did. But what the American people understand is that I look at what we need to get done to keep the American people safe and to move our interests forward, and I make those decisions.

MODERATOR All right, lets go. And that leads us — this takes us right to the next segment, Governor, Americas longest war, Afghanistan and Pakistan...

MITT ROMNEY Bob...

MODERATOR Governor, you get to go first.

MITT ROMNEY You cant — but you cant have the president just lay out a whole series of items without giving me a chance to respond.

MODERATOR With respect, sir, you had laid out quite a program...

MITT ROMNEY Well, thats probably true.

MODERATOR Well give you — well catch up. The United States is scheduled to turn over responsibility for security in Afghanistan to the Afghan government in 2014. At that point,

we will withdraw our combat troops, leave a smaller force of Americans, if I understand our policy, in Afghanistan for training purposes. It seems to me the key question here is; What do you do if the deadline arrives and it is obvious the Afghans are unable to handle their security? Do we still leave? And I believe, Governor Romney, you go first?

MITT ROMNEY Well, were going to be finished by 2014, and when Im president, well make sure we bring our troops out by the end of 2014. The commanders and the generals there are on track to do so. Weve seen progress over the past several years. The surge has been successful and the training program is proceeding apace. There are now a large number of Afghan Security Forces, 350, 000 that are ready to step in to provide security and were going to be able to make that transition by the end of 2014. So our troops will come home at that point. I can tell you at the same time, that we will make sure that we look at whats happening in Pakistan, and recognize that whats happening in Pakistan is going to have a major impact on the success in Afghanistan. And I say that because I know a lot of people that feel like we should just brush our hands and walk away. And I dont mean you, Mr. President, but some people in the — in our nation feel that Pakistan is being nice to us, and that we should walk away from them. But Pakistan is important to the region, to the world and to us, because Pakistan has 100 nuclear warheads and theyre rushing to build a lot more. Theyll have more than Great Britain sometime in the — in the relatively near future. They also have the Haqqani Network and the Taliban existent within their country. And so a Pakistan that falls apart, becomes a failed state, would be of extraordinary danger to Afghanistan and to us. And so were going to have to remain helpful in encouraging Pakistan to move towards a more stable government and rebuild the relationship with us. And that means that our aid that we provide to Pakistan is going to have to be conditioned upon certain benchmarks being met. So for me, I look at this as both a need to help move Pakistan in the right direction, and also to get Afghanistan to be ready, and they will be ready by the end of 2014.

MODERATOR Mr. President?

BARACK OBAMA When I came into office, we were still bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan had been drifting for a decade. We ended the war in Iraq, refocused our attention on Afghanistan, and we did deliver a surge of troops. That was facilitated in part because we had ended the war in Iraq. And we are now in a position where we have met many of the objectives that got us there in the first place. Part of what had happened is wed forgotten why we had gone. We went because there were people who were responsible for 3, 000 American deaths. And so we decimated Al Qaidas core leadership in the border regions between Afghanistan and Pakistan. We then started to build up Afghan forces. And were now in a position where we can transition out, because theres no reason why Americans should die when Afghans are perfectly capable of defending their own country. Now, that transition has to take place in a responsible fashion. Weve been there a long time, and weve got to make sure that we and our coalition partners are pulling out responsibly and giving Afghans the capabilities that they need. But what I think the American people recognize is after a decade of war its time to do some nation building here at home. And what we can now do is free up some resources, to, for example, put Americans back to work, especially our veterans, rebuilding our roads, our bridges, our schools, making sure that, you know, our veterans are getting the care that they need when it comes to post- traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, making sure that the certifications that they need for

good jobs of the future are in place. You know, I was having lunch with some — a veteran in Minnesota who had been a medic dealing with the most extreme circumstances. When he came home and he wanted to become a nurse, he had to start from scratch. And what we've said is let's change those certifications. The first lady has done great work with an organization called Joining Forces putting our veterans back to work. And as a consequence, veterans unemployment is actually now lower than general population. It was higher when I came into office. So those are the kinds of things that we can now do because we're making that transition in Afghanistan.

MODERATOR All right. Let me go to Governor Romney because you talked about Pakistan and what needs to be done there. General Allen, our commander in Afghanistan, says that Americans continue to die at the hands of groups who are supported by Pakistan. We know that Pakistan has arrested the doctor who helped us catch Osama bin Laden. It still provides safe haven for terrorists, yet we continue to give Pakistan billions of dollars. Is it time for us to divorce Pakistan?

MITT ROMNEY No, it's not time to divorce a nation on Earth that has 100 nuclear weapons and is on the way to double that at some point, a nation that has serious threats from terrorist groups within its nation, as I indicated before, the Taliban, Haqqani Network. It's a nation that's not like — like others and it does not have a civilian leadership that is calling the shots there. You have the ISI, their intelligence organization, is probably the most powerful of the — of three branches there. Then you have the military and then you have the civilian government. This is a nation, which, if it falls apart, if it — if it becomes a failed state, there are nuclear weapons there and you've got — you've got terrorists there who could grab their — their hands onto those nuclear weapons. This is — this is an important part of the world for us. Pakistan is — is technically an ally, and they're not acting very much like an ally right now. But we have some work to do. And I — I don't blame the administration for the fact that the relationship with Pakistan is strained. We — we had to go into Pakistan. We had to go in there to get Osama bin Laden. That was the right thing to do. And — and that upset them, but obviously there was a great deal of anger even before that. But we're going to have to work with the — with the people in Pakistan to try and help them move to a more responsible course than the one that they're on. And it's important for them. It's important for the nuclear weapons. It's important for the success of Afghanistan. Because inside Pakistan, you have a — a large group of Pashtun that are — that are Taliban. They're going to come rushing back in to Afghanistan when we go. And that's one of the reasons the Afghan Security Forces have so much work to do to be able to fight against that. But it's important for us to recognize that we can't just walk away from Pakistan. But we do need to make sure that as we — as we send support for them, that this is tied to them making progress on — on matters that would lead them to becoming a civil society.

MODERATOR Let — let me ask you, Governor because we know President Obama's position on this, what is — what is your position on the use of drones?

MITT ROMNEY Well I believe we should use any and all means necessary to take out people who pose a threat to us and our friends around the world. And it's widely reported that drones are being used in drone strikes, and I support that and entirely, and feel the president was right to up the usage of that technology, and believe that we should continue to use it, to continue to go after the people that represent a threat to this nation and to our friends. But let me also note that as I said earlier, we're going to have to do more than just

going after leaders and — and killing bad guys, important as that is. Were also going to have to have a far more effective and comprehensive strategy to help move the world away from terror and Islamic extremism. We havent done that yet. We talk a lot about these things, but you look at the — the record, you look at the record. You look at the record of the last four years and say is Iran closer to a bomb? Yes. Is the Middle East in tumult? Yes. Is — is al- Qaida on the run, on its heels? No. Is — are Israel and the Palestinians closer to reaching a peace agreement? No, they havent had talks in two years. We have not seen the progress we need to have, and Im convinced that with strong leadership and an effort to build a strategy based upon helping these nations reject extremism, we can see the kind of peace and prosperity the world demands.

BARACK OBAMA Well, keep in mind our strategy wasnt just going after bin Laden. We created partnerships throughout the region to deal with extremism in Somalia, in Yemen, in Pakistan. And what weve also done is engaged these governments in the kind of reforms that are actually going to make a difference in peoples lives day to day, to make sure that their governments arent corrupt, to make sure that theyre treating women with the kind of respect and dignity that every nation that succeeds has shown and to make sure that theyve got a free market system that works. So across the board, we are engaging them in building capacity in these countries. And we have stood on the side of democracy. One thing I think Americans should be proud of, when Tunisians began to protest, this nation — me, my administration — stood with them earlier than just about any country. In Egypt we stood on the side of democracy. In Libya we stood on the side of the people. And as a consequence, theres no doubt that attitudes about Americans have changed. But there are always going to be elements in these countries that potentially threaten the United States. And we want to shrink those groups and those networks and we can do that. But were always also going to have to maintain vigilance when it comes to terrorist activities. The truth, though, is that Al Qaeda is much weaker than it was when I came into office. And they dont have the same capacities to attack the U. S. homeland and our allies as they did four years ago.

MODERATOR Lets — lets go to the next segment, because its a very important one. It is the rise of China and future challenges for America. I want to just begin this by asking both of you, and Mr. President, you — you go first this time. What do you believe is the greatest future threat to the national security of this country?