

Romney's Declaration of War

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[Paul A. Rahe](#)

In choosing Paul Ryan as his Vice-Presidential nominee, Mitt Romney has opted to go for broke, and he has indicated that he is a serious man -- less concerned with becoming President of the United States than with saving the country from the disaster in store for it if we not radically reverse course, willing to risk a loss for the sake of being able to win a mandate for reform.

I have been unsparing in my criticism of Romney's political record. I unsay not one word about that. If we were to judge him honestly by his conduct as a Senatorial candidate in Massachusetts and as that state's Governor, I believe that we would find him sadly wanting.

I have also consistently been of the opinion that, of the declared Republican presidential aspirants, Mitt Romney was the least unacceptable. In his private capacity, he is a man of excellent character; as a businessman, he was accomplished in the extreme; and, as a candidate, he consistently displayed the discipline required. There were others in the race who had good qualities, but they lacked one or more of the crucial qualities that Romney possesses.

I also hazarded a guess -- that current circumstances might make a genuine conservative of Mitt Romney, that his understanding of the fiscal crisis we face might very well force him to think more deeply about the moral roots of that fiscal crisis, which is to say, about the inner logic of the administrative entitlements state and the moral as well as the fiscal bankruptcy produced by that inner logic. I was accused of wishful thinking, and the accusation was just. For my wish was, indeed, father to the thought, but this does not mean that the thought was wrong.

Governor Romney's choice of Paul Ryan as his running mate suggests, in fact, that my suspicions were correct. For by making this choice, Mitt Romney is declaring war. There will be no evasion, no triangulation, no attempt to mask what is at stake in this election. Instead, Romney and Ryan will directly confront Barack Obama and call him to account for putting us on a ruinous course.

This will alter radically the dynamics of the race. The money spent by Obama trying to demonize Governor Romney will prove to be money entirely wasted. The election is not going to be about Mitt Romney. It is not going to be about the sexual revolution. It is not going to be about Bain Capital. It is going to be about the failed policies of Barack Obama, about their dangerous character, and about the sober, sound alternative the Republicans represent.

This will help the Republicans in Senate and House races immeasurably, for it will give Romney and Ryan coattails -- now, without a doubt, the candidates in these

other races have something concrete on which to run: repeal Obamacare, pare back the entitlements state, reform our system of taxation, and put our fiscal house in order. No one will doubt the capacity of the Republicans to rule.

I have predicted that Romney will win by a landslide. The choice of Paul Ryan means that Romney has chosen the path that will maximize the significance of his victory and its impact on the races for seats in the House and Senate. As in 1980, this is going to be a national election -- in which local particularities count for much less than usual.

If you still have doubts, remember November, 2010.

[Ricochet](#)

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