

## Romney slams Obama in tough new speech

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Mitt Romney used a tough new campaign speech to personally blast the Obama campaign on Tuesday, saying comments earlier in the day from Vice President Biden are "what an angry and desperate Presidency looks like."

"Mr. President, take your campaign of division and anger and hate back to Chicago," Romney said while campaigning in Ohio.

Romney was responding to Biden's suggestion that the GOP ticket's economic policies would "put y'all back in chains."

The vice president made the remark while campaigning in Virginia, during a discussion of Wall Street regulation.

"They've said it. Every Republican's voted for it. Look at what they value and look at their budget and what they're proposing. Romney wants to let the — he said in the first 100 days, he's going to let the big banks once again write their own rules — unchain Wall Street," Biden said. "They're going to put y'all back in chains. He's said he's going to do nothing about stopping the practice of outsourcing."

Romney repeatedly and harshly criticized Team Obama for the remarks.

"His campaign and his surrogates have made wild and reckless accusations that disgrace the office of the Presidency. Another outrageous charge came a few hours ago in Virginia. And the White House sinks a little bit lower," Romney said.

"This is an election in which we should be talking about the path ahead, but you don't hear any answers coming from President Obama's re-election campaign. That's because he's intellectually exhausted, out of ideas, and out of energy. And so his campaign has resorted to diversions and distractions, to demagoguing and defaming others. This is an old game in politics; what's different this year is that the president is taking things to a new low."

Romney's remarks echo those of his campaign spokeswoman, who earlier in the day called Biden's remarks a "new low."

The counter-punches mark a much tougher tone from Team Romney, who have criticized the Obama campaign before, particularly over a controversial ad by pro-Obama super PAC Priorities USA Action that links Romney to a woman's death, but never in such blunt or harsh terms.

The commercial aired for the first time Tuesday on a television station in Cleveland.

Romney made his remarks in Chillicothe, Ohio. The Buckeye state is one of the most important in the election. No Republican has ever won the presidency without winning Ohio.

Obama campaign spokesman Ben LaBolt said Romney seemed "unhinged."

"Governor Romney's comments tonight seemed unhinged, and particularly strange coming at a time when he's pouring tens of millions of dollars into negative ads that are demonstrably false," LaBolt said in a statement.

Romney new tone could be due to the addition of Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) to the ticket, which was seen as energizing the GOP campaign. And it could be because the election is growing closer and polls show the race is neck-and-neck.

Biden himself explained his remark later on Tuesday, saying "I think I said instead of 'unshackled,' 'unchained.'"

The vice president then criticized Romney's campaign for arguing his comments were outrageous.

"If you want to know what's outrageous, it's their policies and the effects of their policies on middle class America. That's what's outrageous," Biden said.

Obama deputy campaign manager Stephanie Cutter also defended Biden's remarks, saying they "were a derivative of those remarks, describing the devastating impact letting Wall Street write its own rules again would have on middle-class families."

Speaking on MSNBC Tuesday afternoon, she blasted the Romney response as "faux outrage."

Asked by host Andrea Mitchell if she would say the vice president went too far, Cutter responded, "No, I'm not."

"The bottom line is we have no problem with those comments," Cutter added.

Romney campaign spokeswoman Andrea Saul then released a second statement criticizing the Obama campaign.

"In case anyone was wondering just how low President Obama could go in his campaign for reelection, we now know he's willing to say that Governor Romney wants to put people back in chains," Saul said. "Whether its accusing Mitt Romney of being a felon, having been responsible for a woman's tragic death or now wanting to put people in chains, there's no question that because of the president's failed record he's been reduced to a desperate campaign based on division and demonization."

In a statement released after her appearance on MSNBC, Cutter said the Romney campaign's outrage was "hypocritical" given Romney's stump speech that she said questioned the president's patriotism.

-- Amie Parnes contributed

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