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MITT ROMNEY DELIVERS REMARKS TO REPUBLICAN JEWISH COALITION

Boston, MA – Mitt Romney today delivered remarks to the Republican Jewish Coalition in Washington, D.C. The following remarks were prepared for delivery:

I am grateful to the Republican Jewish Coalition for hosting this forum.

Thank you Chairman Flaum and Matt Brooks for your leadership.

And, of course, I join you in honoring the service of Ambassador Sam Fox. Ambassador Fox has contributed in extraordinary ways to our economy, to our communities, to our nation, and to Israel.

Today, we gather as Republicans, Americans, and friends of Israel. For us, the last three years have held a lot of change, but haven't offered much hope.

Our debt is too high and opportunities are too few. Almost a trillion dollars in failed stimulus and trillions more in deficits have left millions of Americans out of work.

The unemployment rate has been over 8% for 34 months. Over the last four years, the median American income has fallen by 10%, even as the costs of food and fuel and healthcare have risen. Americans are suffering. The poor have a safety net and the rich are doing just fine, but middle-income Americans have never seen things so bad.

Internationally, we have witnessed a weakening of our military and a decline in our standing in the world.

President Obama's troop withdrawals in Iraq and Afghanistan were based upon electoral expediency, not military requirement.

He has bowed to foreign dictators. And when the opportunity arose to defend freedom, he's either been late to the game or failed to show up at all.

President Obama rushed to apologize for America, but he has hesitated to speak up for democracy and freedom.

He has visited Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iraq. He even offered to meet with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Yet in three years, he has not found it in his interest to visit Israel, our ally, our

friend, the sole Middle East nation that fully shares our values, the nation in President Truman's words, that is an "embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization."

No, over the past three years, President Obama has instead chastened Israel. In his inaugural address to the United Nations, the President chastised Israel, but said little about the thousands of Hamas rockets raining into its skies. He's publicly proposed that Israel adopt indefensible borders. He's insulted its Prime Minister. And he's been timid and weak in the face of the existential threat of a nuclear Iran.

These actions have emboldened Palestinian hard-liners who now are poised to form a unity government with terrorist Hamas and feel they can bypass Israel at the bargaining table. President Obama has immeasurably set back the prospect of peace in the Middle East.

As President, my policies will be very different. I will travel to Israel on my first foreign trip. I will reaffirm as a vital national interest Israel's existence as a Jewish state. I want the world to know that the bonds between Israel and the United States are unshakable. I want every country in the region that harbors aggressive designs against Israel to understand that their ambition is futile and that pursuing it will cost them dearly.

I would not meet with Ahmadinejad. He should be excluded from diplomatic society. He should be indicted for the crime of incitement to genocide under Article III of the Genocide Convention. Iran's ayatollahs will not be permitted to obtain nuclear weapons on my watch. A nuclear-armed Iran is not only a threat to Israel, it is a threat to the entire world. Our friends must never fear that we will not stand by them in an hour of need. Our enemies should never doubt our resolve.

Today, you will hear from several of my fellow Republicans. Like me, each will acknowledge President Obama's failings toward Israel. Like me, each will assure you of our friendship and commitment to Israel. We are not distinguished from one another by our opposition to President Obama ... or even by our support for Israel. What distinguishes us is our experience, our perspective, and our judgment.

I spent 25 years in business. I've signed the front and the back of a paycheck. I've helped businesses, like the Sports Authority and Staples, to grow from start-ups to international enterprises. I've served as governor of a state and the steward of the Olympics.

My perspective is informed by those experiences and by the defining constants in my life: my 42-year marriage to my wife, Ann; the life we've built with our five sons; and the faith that sustains us. My family, my faith, and our freedom – these are enduring truths in my life. My commitments are firm, and they do not falter.

When I was young, I had the opportunity to live abroad. I recognized that the greatest advantage my parents had given me was being born in America. I am passionate about the principles that have made this nation the land of opportunity and a shining city on a hill.

I believe in America. I believe it is the greatest nation in the history of the earth. I believe that the next century must be an American century. Our highest priority must be to maintain a people, an economy, and a military so strong that no nation would ever risk challenging it.

My faith in America stems both from my faith in the American people, and from the principles that have made our people strong. We are a people from all parts of the world and all walks of

life, but we are strengthened by our nation's unique founding principles. It is not accident or luck that made America the greatest nation in the world – it is the power of our values and beliefs.

We weathered a Great Depression. We emerged victorious from two world wars. We faced down an Evil Empire.

Today, as we face new challenges and threats, I have every conviction that the American people, edified by American principles, will rise to the occasion again, securing our safety, our prosperity, and our peace.

One of these principles is a merit-based society. In a merit-based society, people achieve success and rewards through hard work, education, risk taking, and even a little luck. The founders considered this principle to be one endowed by our Creator, and called it the "pursuit of happiness." We call it opportunity, or we call it the freedom to choose our course in life.

A merit-based, opportunity society gathers and creates a citizenry that pioneers, that invents, that builds and creates. And as these people exert the effort and take the risks inherent in invention and creation, they employ and lift the rest of us, creating prosperity for us all. The rewards they earn do not make the rest of us poorer, they make us better off.

American prosperity is fully dependent upon our opportunity society. I don't think President Obama understands that. I don't think he understands why our economy is the most successful in the world. I don't think he understands America.

He seeks to replace our merit-based society with an entitlement society. In an entitlement society, everyone receives the same or similar rewards, regardless of education, effort and willingness to take risk. That which is earned by some is redistributed to the others. And the only people to enjoy truly disproportionate rewards are the people who do the redistributing—the government.

Entitlement societies are praised in academic circles, far removed from the reality of a competitive world. Opportunity is replaced by the certainty that everyone in an entitlement society will enjoy nearly the same rewards. But there is another certainty: they will be poor.

In an entitlement society, the invigorating pursuit of happiness is replaced by the deadening reality that there is no prospect of a better tomorrow. Risk-taking disappears, innovation withers, and small business is replaced by large, government enterprises. And the result is a nation that stagnates, that declines, that cannot defend itself.

I am convinced that this is where President Obama's "fundamental change" is leading America. And it informs aspects of his foreign policy. Internationally, President Obama has adopted an appeasement strategy. Appeasement betrays a lack of faith in America, in American strength, and in America's future.

Like others among the Washington elite, he believes that America's role as the leader of the world is a thing of the past; that this will be a post-American century, perhaps an Asian century. American strength, he imagines, will eventually or possibly be eclipsed. And so, President Obama seeks to appease those he believes will balance us or challenge our leadership.

This appeasement by this Administration has taken many forms. It includes offers to engage with the world's most despicable dictators. It consists of concessions to Russia to remove our

missile defense sites from Poland and to exclude tactical nuclear weapons from the new, remarkably one-sided, New START treaty. President Obama even looks the other way as China employs unfair trade tactics that endanger our economy and kill jobs.

This President appears more generous to our enemies than he is to our friends. Such is the natural tendency of someone who is unsure of America's strength – or of America's rightful place in the world. The course of appeasement and accommodation has long been the path chosen by the weak and the timid. And history shows it is a path that nation's choose at their own peril.

The President promised that he would fundamentally change America. He is doing just that. At home, he is changing us from an opportunity nation to an entitlement nation. He is building a government so large that feeding it consumes a greater and greater share of the people's production. And it is a government so intrusive that it can command free people and free enterprises according to its bureaucratic will.

Abroad, he is weakening America, shrinking our military, shrinking our commitments to our friends, accommodating our foes, and appeasing the competing forces that are vying for global leadership.

This election is not only a referendum on President Obama's failures on employment, on income growth, on housing, on recovery, or on a nuclear-intent Iran, on an emboldened China and on friends like Israel being put at greater risk. This election will decide what kind of America we will be. It is defining.

Will we remain an opportunity nation or become an entitlement nation? Will we remain the leader of the free world, or become a follower in a more dangerous world? Will America be transformed by Barack Obama, or will America be restored with the founding principles that have made this the greatest nation history has ever known?

Many think that because of his staggering failures, President Obama will be easily defeated. But an incumbent is rarely turned out of the White House, and his resort to class warfare and demagoguery are powerful political weapons.

In less than a year, Americans will be asked to make a choice about the kind of country they want to live in and the kind of future they will bequeath to their children.

It will be a choice between entitlement and merit, between appeasement and resolve.

Our party must offer a candidate who can make the case for freedom, opportunity and strength. Our nominee must offer Americans more than just a chance to vote against President Obama; our nominee must give Americans an opportunity to vote for a different path and a better future. A path dictated not by government, but determined by a free people. A path marked by the virtues of merit, not by the slow decline of entitlement. A path that achieves prosperity through opportunity, and peace through strength.

This is what Americans deserve. This is what the moment demands. And this is what I will deliver, with your help.

Join me. Join me, and I will lead our Party and our Nation through these difficult times to a brighter future.

America has been a shining city on a hill. That light is dimming. But together, we will reignite the spirit of American greatness.

We have wandered and drifted. I will lead us to a better place. Join me, and together we will reclaim and rebuild the America we love.

I believe in America. Our fight starts today. Join me.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the United States of America.

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