

Romney's Iran Gaffe

For a guy who generally seems solid on national security, Mitt Romney flashed some disturbing weakness at last night's foreign-policy debate among the Republican presidential hopefuls. When it comes to Iran, the most immediate threat to the United States and its interests, the Romney strategy is – wait for it – to indict Pres. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. It was as if the governor had missed the 1990s and its painful lesson about the wages of treating a national-security challenge like a mere crime problem.

In June 1998, the Justice Department indicted Osama bin Laden. It was the ultimate demonstration that the United States government lacked resolve and seriousness. Bin Laden was not a mafia don running a racket. He and his al-Qaeda network constituted a ruthless foreign enemy imperiling our national security. By mid-1998, their operatives had been complicit in several terrorist attacks – very likely including collusion with Iran in the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing, which killed 19 U.S. Air Force servicemen in Saudi Arabia. Bin Laden had very publicly declared war on the United States and called for the killing of Americans, including civilians, all over the world.

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