



## All GOP Candidates but Paul Talk Balanced Budget but Won't Cut Military

The others will talk about balancing the budget — though they believe the SuperCommittee should get that job done for them before any of them gets to the White House — but none, with the exception of Ron Paul, is in favor of cutting the military spending, euphemistically called the “defense budget.” Former U.S. Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania made that emphatically clear when I spoke with him in New Hampshire on Sunday. The same Rick Santorum has on [op ed piece](#) in today's *New Hampshire Union Leader* calling for a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution.



No cuts for our worldwide military empire and no tax increases, praise God, but do pass an amendment that will tell us we must balance the budget.

What a wonderful opportunity for the Democrats to tell the country that these allegedly pro-life Republicans really love bombs more than babies — more than old folks, too, whose votes will be up for grabs in 2012. These old folks should be conservative and inclined to vote Republican, but not if the Grand Old Party is going to throw them under the elephant and cut Social Security and Medicare, while giving the Pentagon all the bombers and aircraft carriers it wants and then some.

Elections don't always tell the story of the direction in which the country is headed. Goldwater lost in a landslide in 1964, but the reoriented Republican Party he led was able to energize the nation and make the party's presence felt in Congress two years later and take over the White House two years after that. Similarly, George McGovern lost 49 states to Richard Nixon in 1972, but it has been a far-left, McGovernite party ever since, though Presidents Carter and Clinton had to steer toward the middle of the road to remain politically viable.

John McCain lost the 2008 election in large part because the revived Great Society nature of George Bush's domestic policy and the Republicans' neocon, war-loving foreign policy had been discredited by budgets and events. Those policies are still discredited, but the GOP remains a neoconned party. Therein lie the seeds for Republican defeat and Barack Obama's reelection in 2012.

The wars in Iraq and greater Afghanistan (including Pakistan and a few other neighboring “stans”) has left America understandably war weary. So what are the Republicans doing? For the most part, they are trying to stir up a war with Iran, a much bigger nut to crack than Iraq or Afghanistan have been. When, if ever, will the GOP say “Enough!” to pursuing wars “of choice”?

Barack Obama was perceived by many as the peace candidate in 2008 and he was since awarded, inexplicably, the Nobel Peace Prize. The American people know instinctively what the Republicans refuse to admit: that war is the biggest “big government” program there is. Republicans seem



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on November 30, 2011

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determined to let Obama appear as the peace candidate again. Though he is only slightly less bellicose on the subject of Iran than his GOP critics, Obama could, in running against the “Wars 'R' Us” Republicans, appear to be all that stands between the United States and another war in the Middle East, a conflict with Iran that has the potential to make our misadventure in Iraq look like the “cake walk” it was supposed to be, according to the neocon scenario, which may yet win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Obama also appeared to be more sympathetic to civil liberties than the Bush regime had been. His record on that front is mostly awful, but the Republicans appear determined to hand him the white hat on that as well. Republicans in the Senate, led by John McCain and South Carolina's Lindsey Graham, have crafted provisions in the [National Defense Authorization Act](#) that would declare the entire world a battlefield and empower the President to use the military to round up suspected terrorists and their sympathizers, including U.S. citizens, wherever they find them and lock them up indefinitely, without trials or charges, in military prisons. Allegedly conservative Republicans have now outdone themselves in surrendering power to the executive branch, including powers the executive branch has said it does not want. The Attorney General has said such indefinite detention is both unnecessary and counterproductive. Ditto the Secretary of Defense. The White House has indicated President Obama may veto the measure should it pass both houses with the detention provisions in it. Guess who will look like the hero then. Obama will be able to take the bows for defending a principle Republicans have largely abandoned — the principle of liberty.

It has been a long time since an American election turned on the principle of liberty. When so understood by the American people, liberty could conceivably trump jobs as the dominant issue of the campaign. After all, the only jobs either party can realistically promise is more jobs for jailers.

“Jobs for Jailers in 2012.” Not a very appealing campaign slogan.



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