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## Romney's Charge That 'Any President' Would Have Killed bin Laden False, Former White House Adviser Says and more...

### Romney's Charge That 'Any President' Would Have Killed bin Laden False, Former White House Adviser Says

A former White House adviser during the Clinton administration is striking back at Republican presidential hopeful Mitt Romney's assertion that "any president would have done" the operation President Obama ordered last year which resulted in the death of terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden.

The former Massachusetts governor last month argued: "With regards to Osama bin Laden, we're delighted that [Obama] gave the order to take out Osama bin Laden, any president would have done that. But this one did and that's a good thing."

Obama last May ordered a strike by U.S. commandos on the compound in Pakistan where bin Laden had been living, which resulted in the death of the al Qaeda leader who had planned the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Robert Weiner, a former Clinton White House spokesman and former senior congressional aide; and Richard Mann, senior analyst at Robert Weiner Associates, make a case that Romney's statement that "any president" would have given the order that launched the raid that killed bin Laden is false.

They contrast President George W. Bush's decision to farm out a raid on bin Laden's 2001 Tora Bora location at the time in Afghanistan to Afghan forces who failed in their mission, to Obama's U.S. solo action a decade later that succeeded when Obama did not reveal the strategy ahead of time.

Weiner and Mann, wrote an article featured as the lead front page piece in Sunday's Naples (Fla.) Daily News opinion section, "'ANY PRESIDENT' WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME' AS OBAMA? Romney's Remark About Ordering Raid on bin Laden is Wrong: Ask Bush about Tora Bora."



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*The White House released this photo of President Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and other senior members of his administration all awaiting updates during the raid which killed Osama bin Laden.*

Weiner and Mann document their claim with information including a 2009 Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, “TORA BORA REVISITED: HOW WE FAILED TO GET BIN LADEN.”

In the article, Weiner and Mann say, “When placed in a similar situation with parallel choices, George W. Bush, Obama’s predecessor, failed to succeed because he made the opposite decision. In December 2001, Bush had the chance to capture bin Laden in Tora Bora, Afghanistan, was faced with the choice of doing it ourselves or involving a foreign government, and blew it by asking the Afghans to do it. Whether by ineptness or intent, the Afghani troops allowed bin Laden to escape.”

Weiner and Mann show how Obama’s approach was totally different. “When Obama was questioned as why he did not inform the Pakistanis in advance about Abbottabad, he said, ‘I didn’t tell most people here in the White House. I didn’t tell my own family. It was that important for us to maintain operational security.’ When asked during the 2006 presidential campaign debates what he would do with ‘actionable intelligence’, he said he would indeed have the United States ‘act unilaterally’ rather than in consort with foreign intelligence if necessary to capture bin Laden. That’s precisely what he did.”

The authors quote the 2009 Senate Foreign Relations Committee report: “The Committee says its review ‘removes any lingering doubts and makes it clear that Osama bin Laden was within our grasp at Tora Bora.’ The Committee Chair expressed the ‘hope that we can learn from the mistakes of the past.’ Obama did,” say Weiner and Mann.

They conclude, “The debate moderators and news media as a whole have only allowed the Republicans to differentiate from each other and not from the President’s successes when it comes to foreign policy. With the primary field coming to Florida for the Jan. 31 vote, it is time for the moderators to ask the Republicans if they have any real alternative that would have succeeded as Obama did in taking down Osama bin Laden, Anwar al-Awlaki, or Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi or for that matter, on domestic policy, where Obama reversed the Bush bleeding of 750,000 jobs per month, rescued the auto industry and the nation’s financial institutions, and put the country back to 22 straight months of increased jobs and improved GDP.”

*Scott Nance is the editor and publisher of the news site [The Washington Current](#). He has covered Congress and the federal government for more than a decade.*



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