

Marco Rubio Continues to Make This a Central Theme of His Campaign

Monday morning at the American Legion post in Looksett, New Hampshire, Republican presidential candidate U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) once again unloaded on President Obama over what he says have been national security and foreign policy blunders.

He also criticized fellow Republicans also running for president who he said agreed with the Obama administration policies.

"There have always been voices in our country who say America's not that different, that every country thinks they're special—voices who question our role abroad, who think of America as a bully rather than as a leader. But in 2008, for the first time ever, one of these voices was elected president," he said. "For a while, many thought all of this was the result of naivety. But it wasn't. It's now abundantly clear: Barack Obama has deliberately weakened America. He has made an intentional effort to humble us back to size. As if to say, 'We no longer need to be so powerful because our power has done more harm than good.'"

Rubio outlined the threats posed by China, North Korea, Russia and Iran in the face of Obama administration policies that have shrunk the military and made the U.S. less safe. He then attacked the Democrats' current front-runner, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who he said was incompetent and a liar.

Then, he turned his attacks on fellow Republicans, who he claimed have voted with Obama and Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) "rather than with our men and women in uniform."

Others, he said, would pledge to work with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad or Russian President Vladimir Putin, or were “isolationist candidates who are apparently more passionate about weakening our military and intelligence capabilities than about destroying our enemies.”

“Words and political stunts cannot ensure our security. ISIS cannot be filibustered,” he said. “We need a commander in chief with a record of leadership and judgment. Of all the candidates running in either party, only I have that record.”

The full text of Rubio’s speech follows:

Though the media isn’t covering it, today is actually the anniversary of a historic moment in global affairs.

Eight years ago today—Jan. 4, 2008—was the first day many people around the world heard the name Barack Obama. They awoke to the news that a little-known senator from Illinois had won the Iowa caucuses the night before, and that a political frenzy was sweeping the United States. As that year went on, many around the world who resented America’s influence found a lot to like about this man.

There have always been voices in our country who say America’s not that different, that every country thinks they’re special—voices who question our role abroad, who think of America as a bully rather than as a leader. But in 2008, for the first time ever, one of these voices was elected president.

A man was elected who condemned America for having “arrogance” and the audacity to “dictate our terms” to other nations. A man who apologized for America and bowed pitifully to foreign leaders. A man willing to abandon our allies, make concessions to our enemies, and worst of all, to make historic, devastating cuts to our military and intelligence capabilities.

For a while, many thought all of this was the result of naivety. But it wasn't. It's now abundantly clear: Barack Obama has deliberately weakened America. He has made an intentional effort to humble us back to size. As if to say: "We no longer need to be so powerful because our power has done more harm than good."

From the beginning, elites around the world rejoiced at this. The Nobel Peace Prize was thrown at his feet. But happiest of all have been America's enemies. Because when America steps back, it gives darker forces the space they need to rise. And rise they have.

Let's take a quick tour of Obama's world today.

While Washington continues to weaken our military, China is undergoing the most rapid peacetime military expansion in the history of mankind. It is methodically taking over the South China Sea, one of the most valuable shipping lanes on earth. It has carried out massive cyber-attacks against the United States. It is testing missiles that can obliterate American satellites in space. It's developed a rocket that can destroy a U.S. aircraft carrier.

Meanwhile, North Korea is in the grip of a lunatic. There's no other way to describe him. He expands his military while his country starves. He is growing his nuclear arsenal, and building missiles capable of reaching the west coast of the United States.

To the north, Russia is undergoing its largest military buildup since the Cold War. It is controlled by Vladimir Putin, a gangster determined to redraw the maps of Europe. He has invaded his neighbors. He is aiding Assad in Syria. Obama is standing idly by while Putin is hurtling toward a Second Cold War.

Iran, meanwhile, is governed by a radical Shia cleric who's about to receive tens of billions of dollars of sanctions

relief from our president—tens of billions of dollars that will be used to sponsor anti-American, anti-Israeli terrorism and to develop long range missiles that can be used to launch nuclear weapons.

And then of course there's ISIS, which is forcing its way across the borders of the Middle East, expanding beyond Syria and Iraq, now into Libya, Egypt, Afghanistan and even nuclear-capable Pakistan. It's threatening to advance into Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and has launched attacks into the Sinai, Beirut and as we saw in Paris, into the heart of Europe. It is now recruiting attackers and inspiring mass violence in the United States.

This is just a sampling of the threats Barack Obama will leave to our next president.

America is in far greater danger today than it was eight years ago. Our president thought he could make America like Luxembourg or Switzerland. But he can't. We are the United States of America—the highest-profile, most important, most powerful country in the world. And while we may ignore problems that exist far away, those problems do not ignore us.

In the 21st century, there is no such thing as a remote problem. What happens in Beijing or Moscow or Tehran is our business. Our economy and our lives are directly impacted by global events. Foreign policy is now an important part of domestic policy. Yet President Obama willfully ignores this. Instead of shaping world events, he is shaped by them. Instead of a foreign policy based on strategy, his is based on politics.

We saw this clearly with his despicable speech after the terrorist attack in San Bernardino. When America needed a bold plan of action from our Commander-in-Chief, we instead got a lecture on love, tolerance, and gun control designed to

please the talking heads at MSNBC.

The result of all of this is that people are afraid. And they have every right to be. To make matters worse, candidates for president in both parties cling to the same plan of weakness and retreat.

On one side of this race we have, of all people, Obama's former Secretary of State. The very person who stood by while the conflict in Syria became the worst humanitarian crisis in a generation, who pushed the "reset" button with Russia even as Putin assaulted the sovereignty of his neighbors, and who resorted to half-measures in Libya instead of doing what it would take to prevent terrorists from taking hold – terrorists who ultimately took the lives of four Americans in Benghazi.

Not only is Hillary Clinton incompetent, she's also a liar. While she was leading the public and the families of the fallen to believe the attack in Benghazi happened because of a YouTube video, we now know she was admitting in private emails that it was the result of terrorism. She lied to our faces. No one in the mainstream media has the courage to call her out for it. If I am our nominee, voters will be reminded of it time and time again.

On the other side of this election is the party of Reagan, the party of strong national defense and moral clarity, yet we have Republican candidates who propose that rulers like Assad and Putin should be partners of the United States, and who have voted with Barack Obama and Harry Reid rather than with our men and women in uniform. We have isolationist candidates who are apparently more passionate about weakening our military and intelligence capabilities than about destroying our enemies. They talk tough, yet they would strip us of the ability to keep our people safe.

Words and political stunts cannot ensure our security. ISIS

cannot be filibustered. While some claim they would destroy ISIS, that they would make the sands of the Middle East “glow in the dark,” my question is: with what? Because they certainly can’t do it with the oldest and smallest Air Force in the history of this country, or with the smallest Army we’ve had since World War II, or with the smallest and oldest Navy we’ve had since 1915. Yet these are what we will have thanks to the cuts these candidates have supported and even tried to deepen.

We need a Commander-in-Chief with a record of leadership and judgment. Of all the candidates running in either party, only I have that record.

In early 2011, when the people of Libya were rebelling against Muammar Gaddafi, and it was extremely unpopular to say we should get involved militarily, I was one of the few voices to argue that if America did not get involved decisively and responsibly, a vacuum would open that radical jihadists would rush to fill. And that’s exactly what’s happened in Libya.

It’s also happened in Syria, where I argued from the beginning that we needed to do more than what our president was proposing. Now the results of his approach are plain to see.

And while ISIS was rising, and many in Washington were hesitating, hoping the problem would magically disappear, I went down to the Senate floor and said, quote, “If we do not confront and defeat ISIL now, we will have to do so later, and it will take a lot longer, it will be much costlier and even more painful.” That has also proven true.

I am also the only candidate to have laid out a detailed strategy to roll back our president’s failures – a strategy to rebuild our military, revitalize our alliances, defeat ISIS, and restore American leadership to a world badly in

need of it.

I've offered numerous detailed plans on every major challenge we face, because this is a race for the presidency of the United States. The job is not described in the Constitution as "entertainer in chief" or "commentator in chief" or even, frankly, "economist in chief." It is described as commander in chief. If you can't be bothered to offer specifics on how you will perform that job, then you don't deserve that job.

When you vote for me, you know exactly what you'll get. You'll get a president who will destroy terrorists overseas by authorizing whatever tools our commanders need. You'll get a reversal of the defense cuts that Obama and Harry Reid have forced on our military. You'll get a leader who upholds the promise we make to our men and women in uniform that we will never send them into a fair fight, but will always equip them with the upper hand. Anyone who supports Obama's disastrous defense cuts cannot make that promise.

And I will realize that American personnel are in harm's way every day—that no matter where we place them, they must be adequately protected, so what happened in Benghazi will never happen again, so what happened in Chattanooga will never happen again, so a young American somewhere in Afghanistan, or tonight in Iraq, or serving in an embassy somewhere in the world, will not be vulnerable to attack.

And by the way, it's not just American personnel serving abroad who are in danger. It's also our people here at home. And that's why it's more important today than ever to protect our people's right to protect themselves. President Obama's executive actions limiting gun rights will restrict our law-abiding citizens, not the criminals or terrorists who target them. In fact, the president has not even attempted to point to a single mass shooting these actions would have prevented, because there isn't one.

This president needs to stop focusing on what he's constitutionally forbidden to do, which is interfering with our Second Amendment rights, and he needs to start focusing on what he's constitutionally required to do, which is protecting our people as Commander in Chief.

There is another duty that comes along with being Commander In Chief that this president has forsaken. He has broken the promise we make to our veterans: that when they return home, we're going to care for them as they cared for us. When I am president, we will have a VA system that works for our veterans rather than our bureaucrats. Every candidate supports our veterans, but I am the only one who has brought accountability to the VA. Last year I passed a law saying if managers at the VA are not doing their jobs, they can be fired.

Here's something else I will do: I will not only restore the intelligence programs Obama and Congress have destroyed, I will strengthen them. Because ISIS does not use carrier pigeons to communicate. They use sophisticated encryption and carefully secured networks. It was already difficult to infiltrate them, now it is even harder. If ISIS had lobbyists in Washington, they would have spent millions to support the anti-Intelligence law that was just passed with the help of some Republicans now running for president.

When I am president, we are not going to violate the civil liberties of Americans, but we are going to capture as many terrorists as possible. And when we catch foreign terrorists abroad, we're not going to take them to court or read them their Miranda rights. Unlike some candidates, I don't think foreign terrorists captured abroad should get any rights under our Constitution or in our courts. America cannot fight terrorism from a courtroom. We cannot prosecute ISIS out of existence.

When I am president, foreign terrorists caught overseas will

receive a one-way ticket to Guantanamo where we will interrogate them and gather as much information as we can to prevent future plots. And if you're an American who has committed the ultimate act of betrayal against our country, I will have no qualms about treating you like the enemy combatant you are if you have actionable information and refuse to cooperate.

Our next president needs to be someone prepared on day one to execute his duty—someone with the judgment and the vision to lead this country back. I will be that president.

I will be a president who doesn't just believe America is the greatest country in the world; I will be a president who acts like it. I will take the global stage and say, "I know what the last eight years have been like, but America is back. We once again have a president who understands our role in the world."

That role is not to do everything or solve every problem. But that role is to do absolutely everything required to keep this country safe, and it is to lead and be an example to an afflicted world. We are the only nation capable of bringing others together to confront global challenges, and when I am president, we will do so.

Eight years ago today, our nation and our world took a turn for the worse. But we are not a weak country, we just have a weak president. And starting in a few weeks, we can take a turn back toward strength, toward greatness, toward opportunity and prosperity for all.

New Hampshire plays an enormous role in that, so today I'm asking for your vote.

The time to act is now. We cannot afford to elect Hillary Clinton, because America cannot afford another four years like the last eight. And we cannot settle for just any Republican, because this election is not a choice between two

parties, it is a generational choice on our identity as a nation and as a people.

I am running for president because while America doesn't owe me anything, I have a debt to America I will never fully repay. America changed the very history of my family.

All of us have benefited from the extraordinary story of America—from its greatness around the world and its opportunities here at home, from the safety our veterans and troops have provided, and from America's tradition of strength that has existed across generations.

With all my heart, I want my kids and yours to grow up and inherit an America equally as safe, equally as strong, equally as great as the America that changed my parents' lives, as the America that changed the world. I believe we owe that to our children. For the greatest nation on earth is what we inherited. And that is what we must pass on, and that is what we will pass on, if I can earn your support and your vote.