

Immediate Press Release.

Subject: Mormon BYU Community Opposes Romney : A Vote for Romney is a Vote for War

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Former BYU students and current BYU faculty, who opposed Vice President Dick Cheney coming to campus last year, are launching the 'Open Letter to Mitt Romney' project. " His possible Presidential election however tenuous, could lead our country to a larger war, especially with Iran", as stated by business professor Warner Woodworth. "Pre-emptive war is explicitly condemned in Mormon scripture." Ashley Bledsoe who is Co Chairwoman of Mormons for Equality and Social Justice of Utah County (see mesj.org) and was one of the BYU 25, stated that "we are trying to get as many signatures as possible for the letter so we can show the public that Mitt Romney does not represent certain Mormon values or its peace theology."

" I am disturbed by Brother Romney statements on Iran and refusing to rule out water boarding as torture," as stated by Ashley Sanders, the coordinator of the BYU Alternative Commencement. "Romney seems to be denying civil liberties toward people who may or may not be a threat to United States security when he advocates in doubling the size of Guantanamo. Also by encouraging more war, Romney is misreading American history, underestimating the cost of the conflict in the Middle East, and willfully neglecting the tenets of his religion."

To get the full text of the letter and sign it please go to mormonpeaceproject.org. The letter is authored by Barton Tippetts, a BYU alumnus from the class of 1974 and a combat Viet Nam Veteran,

Letter Summary is as follows:

Dear Brother Mitt Romney,

We the undersigned, as members of the Latter-day Saints community, are very much alarmed that your possible election to the United States Presidency could be the beginning of a war with Iran. You have stated the following:

"If for some reasons they [Iran] continue down their course of folly toward nuclear ambition, then I would take military action if that's available to us...We have a number of options from blockade to bombardment of some kind."

All members of the LDS church are called to..."sue for peace...to all people, and lift up an ensign of peace, and make proclamation of peace unto the ends of the earth." 2. Yet, Mr. Romney, you threaten to bomb and/or enforce a military blockade against a country, which has not shown any military threat to the security of the United States, let alone actually attacked United States territory or citizens.

We want to remind you that the **"Church is and must be against war...**It can not regard war as righteous means of settling international disputes; these should and could be settled—the nations agreeing—by peaceful negotiation and adjustment." 3

Currently, there is no international intelligence indicating that the government of Iran is actually pursuing a nuclear weapons program; Please consider the alternative of following the consensus of the international community by having intense negotiations to resolve the nuclear dispute with Iranian officials."

End of letter.

"Mitt Romney has through his public statements, attempted to incite the American public to engage in another pre-emptive war of aggression. Any LDS candidate for president should instead be trying to follow the example of Jesus Christ by promoting peace and renouncing war," according to William Vanwagenen; a BYU and Harvard graduate who visited Iraq twice doing peace action work.

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