

Romney Hits China On Trade Practices With United States

BY KASIE HUNT
Associated Press

REDMOND, Wash. — Mitt Romney accused China of stealing American inventions and assailed the nation's currency policies Thursday, playing to voters' economic fears amid worries about another recession.

In a speech at Microsoft's headquarters, Romney repeated calls for a free-trade zone among countries that agree to respect those intellectual property rights and called for broader punishments for China if they don't allow their currency, the yuan, to appreciate in value.

Romney didn't offer any new proposals, instead using the speech to hit China's trade practices. He said China's currency manipulation has cost "millions of jobs" in the U.S.

"I want to make sure that people we trade with follow the rules and if someone consistently cheats, I want to make sure they understand that can't go on," he said.

China's government controls the value of its currency against the dollar, a practice that makes Chinese products cheaper in U.S. markets and U.S. goods more expensive in China. U.S. manufacturers say the currency manipulation hikes the price of American im-

ports by as much as 40 percent.

Romney also harshly criticized China for ignoring U.S. copyright laws, accusing it of counterfeiting American designs, technology and pirating software.

The Chinese are "stealing . . . intellectual property, appropriating it at no cost, duplicating and selling it around the world," he said. "There's also hacking going on, where Chinese companies or even the government itself, perhaps, hacks into computers to steal technology."

U.S. officials have long pointed to China as one of the leading safe havens for cybercriminals, or government-sponsored or tolerated hacking.

China has said that allegations of cyberespionage against U.S. companies were groundless, and the sources of Internet attacks are notoriously difficult to pin down.

Amid stubbornly high unemployment and a persistent economic recession, the GOP presidential candidates have often attacked China as they seek to convince voters they can create jobs and turn the economy around.

China's monetary policy has come under fire in Congress, too. The Senate this week passed a bill to impose higher tariffs on China if they don't allow their currency to gain value more quickly. That bill is unlikely to pass the House,

where Republican leaders have opposed it.

Romney said if elected president he would immediately label China as a currency manipulator. He also wants American trade authorities to consider China's currency policies as a subsidy on Chinese goods, which would allow the U.S. to put a countervailing subsidy on Chinese imports.

Democrats say Obama has repeatedly pressured China to stop manipulating its currency.

"A year ago, Romney hit Obama in (Romney's) book for being too tough on China. Now Mitt's a trade warrior? Should he have called his book No Shame!" top Obama adviser David Axelrod

wrote on Twitter on Thursday.

Romney rival Jon Huntsman, a former ambassador to China, has also criticized Romney's trade proposals. "I don't subscribe to the Don Trump school or the Mitt Romney school of international trade. I don't want to find ourselves in a trade war," Huntsman said during Tuesday's debate in New Hampshire.

Economists largely agree with Huntsman; the policy debate among Republicans — Democrats, too — is whether that risk is worth it. Opponents of confronting China worry about a trade war that the fragile global economy cannot afford.

Senate Confirms Gay Woman As Federal Judge

WASHINGTON (AP) — Without Republican support, the Senate on Thursday narrowly confirmed an openly gay woman to become a federal judge in New York.

The 48-44 party-line vote made Alison Nathan, who has served as an adviser to President Barack Obama, the third openly gay person confirmed to the federal bench. Nathan, 39, will serve on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Republicans said they opposed Nathan's confirmation because she indicated in a book that judges should consider foreign law in rulings on human rights law.

"Suffice it to say, I believe her record evidences an activist viewpoint," said Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, the senior Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Democrats praised Nathan's work in the gay community. During the 2008 presidential campaign, she was a senior adviser to Obama. The next year, she was appointed an associate White House counsel, advising the president on judicial and legal affairs.

Nathan now serves as special counsel to the solicitor general of New York. She graduated from Cornell University and received her law degree there. She was editor-in-chief of the law review.

Telemundo To Hold GOP Debate

BY LAURA WIDES-MUNOZ
AP Hispanic Affairs Writer

MIAMI — Spanish-language Telemundo network announced Thursday it will host its first presidential primary debate in December.

The Republican primary debate will be held in Las Vegas and comes weeks before the early primaries begin.

The locale is key, as Nevada is one of two early primary states with a growing number of Latino voters. Florida is the other.

Top Telemundo news anchor Jose Diaz-Balart will host the debate, which will be broadcast in Spanish.

Telemundo spokesman Alfredo Richard said the network is still hammering out the details and is in conversations with the candidates.

"The debate will most likely mix both English and Spanish to accommodate the needs both of the candidates and our viewers," he said in an email to The Associated Press.

The program will cover immigration, the economy, health care and education.

Telemundo is producing the debate with its sister network NBC News, which will also broadcast the program. Both are owned by NBC Universal. Telemundo has partnered with NBC networks in the past, but it has never taken the lead on a debate.

During last month's MSNBC GOP primary debate, the cable network had Diaz-Balart come on only for a few minutes to ask the candidates about immigration. That decision was widely panned by bloggers as patronizing and awkward at best.

Besides being one of the nation's top Spanish-language news anchors, the award-winning Diaz-Balart frequently guest-hosts news programs on MSNBC.

He is also the brother of former and current Florida GOP U.S. Reps. Lincoln and Mario Diaz-Balart.

Telemundo's announcement comes after at least six of the GOP candidates said they would not appear at a debate proposed by Spanish-language rival Univision over that network's handling of a story on a relative of Florida U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio.

If the candidates all agree to appear on the Telemundo debate, it would be a major coup for the fast-growing Miami-based network.

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