

Romney in Obama's Crosshairs

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WASHINGTON — The front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination is coming under heavy assault as President Barack Obama's team revs up for the November election.

With Mitt Romney forecast to win Tuesday's primary in Wisconsin, a victory that would all but end the Republican nomination battle, Vice President Joe Biden began the Democratic attack Sunday.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton then criticized the former Massachusetts governor for holding backward-looking views on foreign policy.

Obama's team seized on Romney's foreign policy inexperience. Clinton responded to Romney's comment that Russia is America's "No. 1 geopolitical foe."

"I think it's somewhat dated to be looking backward instead of being realistic about where we agree, where we don't agree," Clinton said.

Prominent Republicans are starting to rally behind Romney as the contest shifts from primary elections to win the nomination to the real contest for the White House.

"I think the chances are overwhelming that [Romney] will be our nominee," Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said Sunday. "It seems to me that we're in the final phases of wrapping up this nomination. And most of the members of the Senate Republican conference are either supporting him, or they have the view that I do, that it's time to turn our attention to the fall campaign and begin to make the case against the president of the United States."

Representative Paul Ryan, the influential chairman of the House Budget Committee, spent the weekend at Romney's side campaigning in his home state of Wisconsin. The state's first-term U.S. senator, Ron Johnson, endorsed Romney on Sunday.

Obama is vulnerable in his bid for a second White House term, weighed down by the economic suffering of the recent recession. But his prospects improved as the Republicans engaged in a prolonged and bitter nomination fight and the economy showed signs of a sustained recovery.

The Obama camp is not wasting any time in taking the attack to Romney.

"I think Governor Romney's a little out of touch," Biden said. "I can't remember a presidential candidate in the recent past who seems not to understand, by what he says, what ordinary middle-class people are thinking about and are concerned about."

With about half of the state-by-state Republican nominating contests complete, Romney has won 54 percent of the delegates at stake, putting him on track to reach the threshold 1,144 national in June, well before the Republican National Convention in August.

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