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Jon Huntsman Gears Up For Formal Presidential Announcement

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Former Utah Governor and Ambassador to China Jon Huntsman will formally enter the 2012 presidential contest on Tuesday when he announces his candidacy with the Statue of Liberty in the background.



Yesterday, the Huntsman campaign offered some clues as to what the contours of their campaign will look like and also displayed what their strengths and weaknesses may be once Huntsman formally enters the fray.

First, an e-mail addressed from his wife, Mary Kaye, said:

In less than a week, a new generation of conservative leadership will emerge. No loud voices or drama, instead a vision for America that reverses the course we're on.

The e-mail hints that Huntsman will probably be nuanced, cerebral and won't shout like a talk radio host on the campaign trail. While this will allow Huntsman to be authentic and not be someone he is not, it may not suit a GOP primary electorate that is fed up with President Obama and where he is trying to take the country.



Second, a web [video](#), featuring



someone who resembles Huntsman is driving through a Utah desert on a motorbike. In the video, it says that Huntsman did not get fame with his band, which was named Wizard.

From watching the video, one can assume that Huntsman will cast himself as an outdoorsy, cool motorcycle enthusiast while highlighting his impressive record as Governor of Utah that saw him get strong marks from both the CATO Institute and the Pew Foundation.

He'll appeal to the mainstream media and young voters, but conservatives may want more someone who is more combative than a figure who exudes a James Dean like coolness about him.

Third, [Esquire magazine](#), hardly a conservative publication released excerpts on Huntsman's foreign policy view. As the below quote shows, Huntsman will probably argue that America needs to stand down in Afghanistan so the country can be fiscally stronger domestically.

"If you can't define a winning exit strategy for the American people, where we somehow come out ahead, then we're wasting our money, and we're wasting our strategic resources," Huntsman told Esquire as part of a long profile in its August issue. "It's a tribal state, and it always will be. Whether we like it or not, whenever we withdraw from Afghanistan, whether it's now or years from now, we'll have an incendiary situation... Should we stay and play traffic cop? I don't think that serves our strategic interests."

In the same interview, Huntsman top campaign official, John Weaver, says, of Mitt Romney, "What version are we on now? Mitt 5.0? 6.0?"

The *Esquire* interview suggests Huntsman may make a play, with his foreign policy views, with younger voters who are more fiscal hawks than foreign policy hawks.

The interview, and the publication it was given to, also represents the dilemma Huntsman faces as the mainstream media and cultured folks embrace him.

With low recognition, Huntsman needs the mainstream media to spread his message around. But conservatives have always distrusted or suspected at best, loathed, at worst, the mainstream media so the more the mainstream media is enamored of Huntsman, the more conservatives, by association, may distrust Huntsman.

This is a dynamic the Huntsman campaign will have to deal with going forward as they manage a candidate with considerable political skill, tons of potential, and a very high ceiling, particularly in the crucial first in the nation New Hampshire primary.

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