



Romney Foreign Trip Likely No Big Deal for US Voters

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Just about everywhere he went on his week-long foreign trip, U.S. Republican Presidential hopeful Mitt Romney seemed to make headlines.

In London, the British tabloids screamed "Mitt the Twit," harshly criticizing the former governor of the northeastern state of Massachusetts for criticizing British security preparations ahead of the Olympics.

In Israel, Romney offended Palestinians when he called Jerusalem Israel's capital; Palestinians want to make East Jerusalem the capital of their future state.

And in Poland, one of Romney's aides caused a bit of commotion when he told reporters to "shove it" as they shouted questions at the candidate while he visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The aide later called the media to apologize.

George Mason University Professor of Public Policy Jeremy Mayer says, in many ways for Romney, the trip could not have gone much worse.

"He looked unpresidential. He looked unprepared. He made unforced errors," said Mayer.

So, with less than 100 days until Americans go to the polls, what difference does all this make? Mayer says very possibly, none at all.

"I don't think his mistakes broke through to the consciousness [of the American public]," he said, arguing that, if anything, Romney wasted a week trying to capture the attention of the very small number of U.S. voters who pay close attention to foreign policy.

Recent polling data backs up Mayer's assertion that the trip had little impact on what American voters are thinking. [Tracking polls](#) done by the [Gallup Organization](#) show Romney ended July trailing President Barack Obama by a mere two percentage points, making the race a statistical tie.

James Carafano at the Washington, D.C.-based [Heritage Foundation](#) says the trip, in fact, did some good.

"The world is not going to be surprised to see what kind of foreign policy-national security president Romney is. He'll be very different from Obama. So, in that sense, I give the campaign an 'A'," he said.

Still, Carafano says the trip should give the Romney campaign reason for concern, especially given the troubles the Romney campaign had with public relations and messaging to the foreign audiences.

Others are more critical. "He managed to make a number of mistakes that didn't play very well either at home or abroad, so I don't think he can be very pleased overall with how the week went," said Judd Legum with the [Center for American Progress](#).

"Every day and every week is important, so it did interfere with what he wanted to accomplish on this trip, which was presenting him as a

credible face for America abroad."

Justin Logan, director of [Foreign Policy Studies at the Cato Institute](#), agrees with those who say Romney's gaffes during the trip will not impact the U.S. presidential race. But he says it is clear that Romney needs better advice on the diplomatic front.

"I do think it is interesting, and somewhat surprising, that there were some of the unforced errors - for example, causing a stir in Britain by saying some things that, in fairness, were not untrue about Britain's preparation for the Olympics," he said. "There just was no reason to bring that up. Even though sometime things are true, the art of diplomacy is very much about sometimes not saying things."

That may be one reason why many U.S. presidential candidates do not make overseas trips during the campaign - the most recent exception being President Obama, who drew large crowds while campaigning abroad in 2008.

Analysts are quick to point out that Romney's trip was designed to be much more low-key in its approach. And George Mason University's Mayer says the rough spots Romney ran into during his foreign trip could be due to the fact that the experienced businessman thrust himself into an area much less familiar to him - the diplomatic arena.

"I think he thought this was going to be easy," he said.