

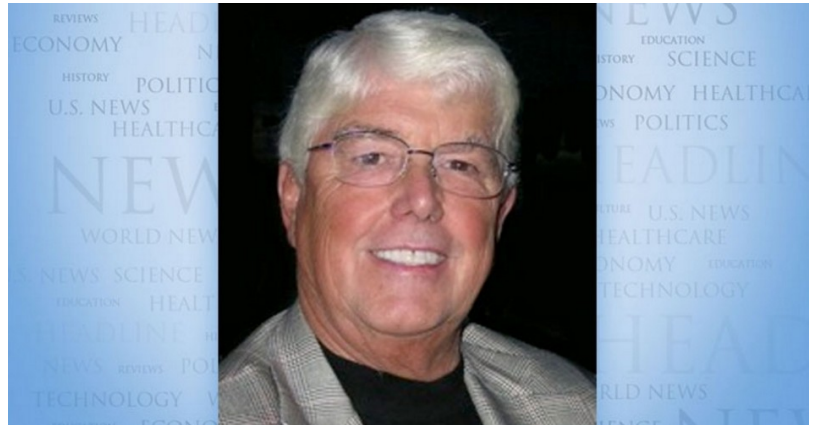


Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on March 19, 2013

Rand Paul's Inspiring Stand

"For the first time since the election, I actually have some *hope*." That's what one longtime conservative said to me after Senator Rand Paul's 13-hour filibuster earlier this month.

My friend is far from the only one to feel that way. Paul's dramatic gesture had conservatives, libertarians and even many on the left cheering his principled stand. And no wonder. Here's how Paul opened his lengthy marathon on the Senate floor on Wednesday, March 6:



I rise today to begin to filibuster John Brennan's nomination for the CIA I will speak until I can no longer speak. I will speak as long as it takes, until the alarm is sounded from coast to coast that our Constitution is important, that your rights to trial by jury are precious, that no American should be killed by a drone on American soil without first being charged with a crime, without first being found to be guilty by a court.

Who on earth could dispute that? Well, as it turns out, Paul's challenge to unrestrained government power makes some Republicans very uncomfortable. Two of the more outrageous attacks came from establishment Republicans John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.).

The day after Paul's marathon effort, McCain pontificated, "I don't think what happened yesterday was helpful to the American people." Later, he inserted his foot even further into his mouth, when he told one reporter: "It's always the wacko birds on right and left who get the media megaphone." When asked to name names, McCain didn't hesitate. "Rand Paul" was the first one he mentioned.

McCain's buddy and Old Guard collaborator Graham went even further. He denounced Paul's demand for clarification on warrantless domestic drone strikes, saying, "I do not believe that question deserves an answer." Oh really, Senator? Sounding more like a spoiled child than a U.S. Senator, Graham added that Paul's filibuster had convinced him to vote in favor of confirming John Brennan as CIA director.

In one of the most dramatic contrasts I've seen in many a month, McCain and Graham were hobnobbing with the President at a gourmet dinner while seven other Senators joined Paul on the Senate floor. Six of them were Republicans: Mike Lee of Utah, Ted Cruz of Texas, Jerry Moran of Kansas, Marco Rubio of Florida, Saxby Chambliss of Georgia, and Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania. One lonely Democrat, Ron Wyden of Oregon, was also there. Here's a tip of the hat to all of them.

While that was happening on Capitol Hill, McCain and Graham were dining with Barack Obama at the Jefferson Hotel in downtown Washington. It seems the President decided to call a time-out in his constant campaigning against the Republicans and put on a show for some bipartisan support. Obama even agreed to pick up the tab.

It was no surprise that McCain and Graham were among the first to be invited. It's always going to be "business as usual" with these guys.

And isn't that the point? What happened for almost 13 hours on March 6-7 is that one outspoken and



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determined person showed the world that you don't have to go along to get along, that you can receive enormous public support when you take a principled stand for freedom.

Kentucky's senior Senator, Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, hasn't always been one of Paul's more ardent admirers. But in this instance he was effusive in his praise of his colleague.

"I wanted to congratulate him for his tenacity, for his conviction, and for being able to rally the support of a great many people," he declared. In a not-so-subtle reference to Graham, McConnell said that the support Paul received demonstrates that "this is a legitimate question."

[BuzzFeed](#) spoke for many hopeful conservatives when it wrote: "Republicans rallied around Paul in a way that hasn't been seen on the national stage in years and could provide a glimmer of hope for a listless party."

From where I sit, it looks like a lot more than a "glimmer," my friends. BuzzFeed seems to agree, because it went on to write, "'There was a hell of a lot of team play tonight,' a senior GOP leadership aide said Thursday morning, acknowledging that Paul's filibuster had given the GOP a much needed jolt of energy." Indeed, it has.

On Thursday morning, March 7, the White House issued a statement confirming that the President does not have the power to use drones in this country to kill American citizens not engaged in combat.

Attorney General Eric Holder issued the actual response, which White House Press Secretary Jay Carney read during his daily press briefing. "It has come to my attention," the attorney general wrote, "that you have now asked an additional question: 'Does the President have the authority to use a weaponized drone to kill an American not engaged in combat on American soil?' The answer to that question is no."

Doesn't sound like much of a concession, does it? But it was enough for Paul to declare it "satisfactory." He said he would no longer oppose a vote on the nomination of Brennan to head the Central Intelligence Agency. Brennan was easily confirmed later that week by a vote of 63-34.

So was all of this much ado about nothing? Not at all. Paul spoke to the fears a growing number of Americans have of their own government. Near the end of his 13-hour marathon, he declared:

Certain things rise above partisanship. And I think your right to be secure in your person, the right to be secure in your liberty, the right to be tried by a jury of your peers — these are things that are so important and rise to such a level that we shouldn't give up on them easily.

In fact, we shouldn't give up on them at all. When Paul seized the moment, he drew a line in the sand that inspired a lot of us to stand up as well. Thank you, Senator.

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

Chip Wood was the first news editor of *The Review of the News* and also wrote for *American Opinion*, our two predecessor publications. He is now the geopolitical editor of *Personal Liberty Digest*, where his *Straight Talk* column appears weekly. This article first appeared in [PersonalLiberty.com](#) and has been reprinted with permission.



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