



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on April 7, 2015

Ad Calls Rand Paul “Wrong and Dangerous” on Foreign Policy

Both the Rand Paul campaign for president and the anti-Paul campaign are underway.

The Kentucky senator announced he is seeking the 2016 Republican nomination in a posting on his website Tuesday, while [The Hill reported](#) that a GOP-affiliated group has purchased \$1 million worth of ads warning that Paul’s foreign policy views are “wrong and dangerous.” The ads are slated to begin running Wednesday in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and Nevada, the same early caucus and primary states Paul will be visiting after launching his campaign with a “Stand with Rand” rally in Louisville, Kentucky, Tuesday.



The ads are sponsored by Foundation for a Secure and Prosperous America, a non-profit group led by veteran Republican strategist Rick Reed, *The Hill* reported. The first one, called “Sanctions,” accuses Paul of backing President Obama’s negotiations with Iran over that country’s nuclear program.

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“The Senate is considering tough new sanctions on Iran,” the ad says. “President Obama says he’ll veto them and Rand Paul is standing with him. Rand Paul supports Obama’s negotiations with Iran and he doesn’t understand the threat.” The ad includes a clip of Paul saying, “it’s ridiculous to think that they’re a threat to our national security.”

“Rand Paul is wrong and dangerous,” the ad concludes. “Tell him to stop siding with Obama because even one Iranian bomb would be a disaster.” The 30-second ads are scheduled to run 80 to 100 times per day in the early-voting states.

Opposition to Obama’s negotiations with Iran has become a virtual litmus test among congressional Republicans and Paul is, in fact, one of 47 GOP senators who signed a letter to Iran’s leaders advising them that any agreement reached could be scuttled by Congress or repudiated by the next president. Republicans have been calling for tougher economic sanctions against Iran, something Obama insists will undermine diplomatic efforts. Warnings of an imminent Iranian nuclear bomb have been issued for decades, while Iran insists its nuclear facilities are designed for peaceful purposes such as energy production and medical applications. A National Intelligence Estimate, issued by all 16 U.S. intelligence agencies in 2007, reported Iran had abandoned a nuclear weapons program in 2003. A NIE report in 2011 also said there was no evidence Iran was pursuing a nuclear bomb.

Paul, 52, becomes the second Republican to declare his candidacy in what is expected to be a crowded primary field. Texas Senator Ted Cruz announced his bid last week, giving his maiden campaign speech at the conservative Christian Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Paul’s father, former Texas Congressman Ron Paul, twice sought the Republican presidential nomination, running on a platform of



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small-government conservatism and a strong opposition to needless military interventions abroad. Rand Paul has attracted many of the elder Paul's followers among libertarian and Tea Party Republicans.

"I am running for president to return our country to the principles of liberty and limited government," the senator wrote in the website posting announcing his candidacy. While his likely Republican rivals might say the same, on other issues Paul has taken stands sharply at odds with what is generally considered Republican orthodoxy.

"In a primary contest of candidates debating which of them is the most doctrinaire conservative," the *New York Times* noted, "Mr. Paul is likely to be the only one arguing for reducing federal drug penalties, clamping down on the nation's intelligence agencies and taking a more deliberative approach to military intervention." Yet some in the libertarian movement who were enthusiastic supporters of Ron Paul are staying away from the Rand Paul campaign, due to what they say is his temporizing on issues as a concession to "mainstream" Republicans.

In Iowa, where the first voting in the nominating contest will take place next year, three members of the Ron Paul-aligned Liberty movement — State Senator Jason Schultz and Iowa Republican Party central committee members Chad Steenhoek and Joel Kurtinitis — announced their endorsement of Cruz, [Politico reported](#). Drew Ivers, chairman of Ron Paul's 2012 Iowa campaign, said he is not endorsing Rand Paul, claiming the Kentucky senator has wavered from his previous positions on important issues.

"He's moderating on most of them, not taking a real clear stance on a number of them," Ivers told Politico. "The strategy of sending a blended message is one that has risk." Ivers said he does not plan to endorse any candidate.

In pointing out "stylistic distinctions" between Ron and Rand Paul, Politico noted that the elder Paul was denied a speaking slot at the 2012 Republican convention, in large part because of his refusal to endorse the party's presidential nominee, Mitt Romney. Rand Paul issued the obligatory endorsement and got a prime speaking slot. But Justin Raimondo, editor of the libertarian *Antiwar.com*, cites more substantive reasons why some who were attracted to the senator's policy positions have since become disillusioned by his departures from them.

"For the life of me, I can't figure out what he really believes — where he really stands, especially when it comes to foreign policy," Raimondo wrote in an [op-ed for the *Los Angeles Times*](#). He cited Paul's statement at a January forum in which he warned Senate colleagues and fellow presidential hopefuls Cruz and Marco Rubio of Florida that if they voted for new sanctions against Iran in the middle of negotiations, they would be "ruining it."

"Two months later," Raimondo wrote, Paul himself "was 'ruining it' by putting his signature on an open letter to the Iranian leadership. Authored by arch-neoconservative Senator Tom Cotton, the letter basically told Tehran that a Republican in the White House would nullify any deal negotiated by the Obama administration."

Paul has defended the letter, saying in an interview with talk-show host Glenn Beck that it was "informing another country of how our Constitution works" and telling a gathering in Texas that it would give Obama added leverage in his negotiations. "I want the president to negotiate from a position of strength," he said, "which means that he needs to be telling them in Iran, 'I've got Congress to deal with.'"

In other examples of the senator's "record of policy contradictions," Raimondo noted that Paul initially cautioned against confrontations with Russia over its backing of pro-Russian rebels fighting for power



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in Ukraine. “Some on our side are so stuck in the Cold War era that they want to tweak Russia all the time, and I don’t think that is a good idea,” Paul said. A few months later, he was calling for Russia’s “punishment,” citing “our role as a global leader to be the strongest nation in opposing Russia’s latest aggression.”

Shortly after entering the Senate in 2011, Paul proposed a budget eliminating foreign aid to any nation, including Israel. He has since voted to increase aid to Israel “and boasted about it in a statement issued by his office,” Raimondo wrote.

Last June, Senator Paul wrote an op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal* opposing air strikes against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. “What would airstrikes accomplish?” he asked. “We know that Iran is aiding the Iraqi government against ISIS. Do we want to, in effect, become Iran’s air force?” A few months later, Paul was calling for a declaration of war against the Islamic State. Last month Senator Paul called for the creation of a new nation of Kurdistan. Redrawing the map of the Middle East to create a new nation seems a curious position for one thought to be a non-interventionist on foreign policy, even accused by some of being “isolationist.”

The long campaign for the party’s presidential nomination should give Paul ample opportunity to explain his apparent policy contradictions — or make more of them. It might also give some once attracted to his emerging candidacy a further opportunity to consider whether, despite the contradictions, Paul is not a better alternative than any of the others in the field.

“Sen. Rand Paul continues to have tremendous support from the vast majority of the liberty movement,” said Sergio Gor, communications director for the Paul campaign. But for some, the doubts are growing.

“He started out as ‘a different kind of Republican’ — a characterization his campaign never tires of invoking,” wrote Raimondo. “But Paul’s response to the barrage of attacks unleashed by GOP mandarins has been to deny this difference. This strategy threatens to nullify his attempt to broaden his appeal beyond conservative voters even as he alienates his libertarian base.”

Photo of Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.): AP Images



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