



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 31, 2014

DNC Fires a Preemptive Shot at Rand Paul

Republican Rand Paul has claimed that if he runs for president in 2016, he would be able to draw more Democratic and independent votes than most other GOP hopefuls. Apparently, someone at the Democratic National Committee agrees with him and considers it time, some 26 months before the next presidential election, to take a preemptive shot at the junior senator from Kentucky.



“It’s disappointing that Rand Paul, as a Senator and a potential presidential candidate, blames America for all the problems in the world, while offering reckless ideas that would only alienate us from the global community,” according to a [statement](#) issued by DNC press secretary Michael Czin.

“Unfortunately, this is nothing new for Paul. Last week he criticized American policy to the president of another country on foreign soil. This week he’s blaming the Obama Administration for another nation’s civil war. That type of ‘blame America’ rhetoric may win Paul accolades at a conference of isolationists but it does nothing to improve our standing in the world. In fact, Paul’s proposals would make America less safe and less secure,” Czin wrote. “Simply put, if Rand Paul had a foreign policy slogan, it would be — The Rand Paul Doctrine: Blame America. Retreat from the World.”

It reads like statements Republicans made about George McGovern in 1972 or the late Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick’s indictment of the “San Francisco Democrats” after the party nominated Walter Mondale in that city in 1984. Then again, it is similar to what some of Rand Paul’s fellow Republicans have said about him, even as they said the same about the senator’s father, former Texas Congressman and two-time candidate for the GOP presidential nomination Ron Paul. While there are nuanced differences in policy and style, both Pauls differ from those so-called mainstream Republicans who contend that the answer to all the problems created by U.S. military interventions around the world is more U.S. military interventions around the world.

The DNC statement was in response to an op-ed article by Sen. Paul that appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* last week under the heading, “[How U.S. Interventionists Abetted the Rise of Isis.](#)” In his piece, Paul characterized Obama foreign policy actions in the past year as examples of “shooting first and asking questions later.” Recalling that a year ago Obama and others in Washington were eager to assist rebel groups fighting to overthrow the government of Bashar Assad in Syria, Paul said efforts to degrade Assad’s power reduced his ability to defeat the jihadists who have claimed Raqqa, Syria, as the capital of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, a capital recently bombed by Assad’s air force. Since the United States has been bombing ISIS targets in Iraq, Assad is now a de facto U.S. ally in the war against ISIS. Not surprisingly, Paul focused much of his criticism on former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who, according to the conventional wisdom, is the likely Democratic nominee for president in 2016.

“We are lucky Mrs. Clinton didn’t get her way and the Obama administration did not bring about regime change in Syria,” Paul wrote. “That new regime might well be ISIS.” Secretary of State John Kerry, who succeeded Clinton in 2013, was no more prescient, Paul said, noting that Kerry had called



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the failure to strike at Assad a “Munich moment,” in reference to the British accommodation of Hitler at the Munich Conference in 1938.

“The CIA delivered arms and other equipment to Syrian rebels, strengthening the side of the ISIS jihadists,” Paul wrote. “Some even traveled to Syria from America to give moral and material support to these rebels even though there had been multiple reports some were allied with al Qaeda.”

Paul might have added, and likely will add as time goes on, that the 2003 invasion of Iraq and overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s decades-old secular regime not only set loose years of factional warfare, but also created a power vacuum that ISIS arose to fill when U.S. forces finally left at the end of 2011.

Like a majority of members of Congress of both parties, Hillary Clinton, then the junior senator from New York, voted in 2002 to grant President Bush the authority to wage war and effect “regime change” in Iraq, despite the fact that Iraq had neither attacked the United States nor posed any discernible threat to America’s safety or security. As first lady, she reportedly urged President Clinton to undertake the devastating air war over Bosnia, and as secretary of state she was instrumental in persuading President Obama to conduct bombing raids against Libya and help the insurgents there overthrow the government of Libyan strong man Moammar Gadhafi.

Some of the weapons the U.S. supplied to Gadhafi’s enemies were turned against Americans in the September 11, 2012 heavily armed assault in Benghazi that killed four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens. U.S. weapons supplied to Libyan rebels also went to jihadists in Syria according to numerous accounts.

Paul perceives Clinton as being as much of a hawk as Republican Senator John McCain and believes her hawkishness would work to his advantage should they end up running against one another, he said in an interviewed aired a week ago on [Meet the Press](#).

“If you want to see a transformational election in our country, let the Democrats put forward a war hawk like Hillary Clinton, and you’ll see a transformation like you’ve never seen,” said Paul, an ophthalmologist who was interviewed while in Guatemala with 28 other American volunteers on a humanitarian mission organized by the Moran Eye Center in Utah. “I think that’s what scares the Democrats the most,” he said, “is that in a general election, were I to run, there’s going to be a lot of independents and even some Democrats who say, ‘You know what, we are tired of war. We’re worried that Hillary Clinton will get us involved in another Middle Eastern war, because she’s so gung-ho.’”

Most Republicans — including possible presidential candidates Chris Christie, Marco Rubio, Rick Perry et al — would be ideologically incapable of making that case against Hillary Clinton. No matter how hawkish she might be, the establishment Republican narrative would almost certainly be that she’s weak, would weaken American defenses and would be too reluctant to use military force. That, after all, is always the Republicans’ narrative against the Democratic nominee for president and even against members of their own party who are not eager to intervene in other nations’ civil wars to protect some imagined American interest.

Just as every armed dictator in the world is, to the neoconservative desktop warriors who dominate American foreign policy, another Adolf Hitler, so every Democratic president or candidate for president must be another George McGovern, who wanted to “cut and run” in Vietnam, pull the rug out from under Asian allies, send a message to the world of American weakness and lack of resolve, etc. That would likely be the kind of campaign a candidate approved by the GOP Republican establishment would



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run against the hawkish Hillary Clinton. And the voters might very well notice the disconnect.

Voters might have noticed the vacuous nature of the oft-repeated Republican charge against Obama that he is “reluctant to use military force.” It is an odd characterization of a president, who since he has been in office, has been bombing in at least half a dozen countries. If Obama were to spend the rest of his time in office bombing every country but ours, Republicans in Congress and commentators on Fox News and elsewhere would no doubt still say he is “reluctant to use military force.” The Republican mindset requires them to say that. They have invested too much in that narrative for too many years to give it up now.

Photo of Sen. Rand Paul: AP Images



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