



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on February 19, 2013

Rubio Would Expand “Liberal International Order”

[Marco Rubio](#), the Grand Old Party’s Great Hispanic Hope, appears to be the party’s early frontrunner for president in 2016, which must make him nervous. Early frontrunners have often shown a talent for missing the White House, as the governors Romney, George and Mitt, discovered. Yet Rubio is hardly shunning the limelight, embracing instead every opportunity to go after Barack Obama. The latest [gauntlet](#) hurled at the president’s feet was Rubio’s reaction during the weekend over a leaked draft of the White House strategy for granting citizenship for illegal immigrants. The Florida senator is himself part of the bipartisan “gang of eight” that is promoting a “pathway to citizenship” for illegal immigrants, but he was irate that the White House was drafting a plan without input from himself and other Republicans.



Chosen by the party brass to deliver the GOP response to the State of the Union address last week, Rubio, a bilingual Floridian of Cuban descent, delivered his address in both English and Spanish, while confining his criticism of the president to domestic economic policies. On Friday, however, he was on the [Foreign Policy](#) magazine website with an article taking Obama to task over his handling of international affairs. His critique of the Obama doctrine reads like standard-issue neocon talking points, suggesting that a Rubio foreign policy would be little different, if at all, from that of George W. Bush — or Barack Obama.

For all of its bold, assertive rhetoric, the foreign policy Republicans are pushing as an alternative to Obama’s supposed passivity is really a call for more of the same. When Obama increases economic sanctions on Iran, Republicans call for still more and tougher sanctions — “crippling sanctions” is the phrase often used by Romney in last year’s presidential campaign. When the president condemned the Tehran regime for its brutal crackdown on dissidents, the condemnation wasn’t strong enough and wasn’t issued soon enough. When he pledges virtually unqualified support for Israel, Republicans complain he is throwing Israel “under the bus.” When he expresses support for the Syrian rebels and arranges arms shipments from foreign sources, it isn’t enough to suit Republican hawks. When Obama sent U.S. bombers to the rescue of rebel forces in Libya in 2011, the fact that he intervened militarily in a foreign war without seeking congressional approval seemed the least of the concerns of most congressional Republicans. Depending on the day of the week and who was speaking at any particular time, the complaint could be summarized as, Obama was wrong to go into Libya and he should have done it sooner.

But as Obama extends the Bush doctrine to wage war all over the Middle East and parts of Africa, the Grand Old Party and the leading neocon lights at *National Review* and *The Weekly Standard* appear to



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have no objection, save perhaps that he is not doing enough of it. When he uses drones for targeted killings, including the assassination of American citizens, the only objections we hear from the Republican side of the aisle are from former Rep. Ron Paul of Texas and his son, Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky. When the president wants authority to imprison terror suspects, including American citizens, indefinitely and without trial, Republicans can be counted on to vote him that authority. The problem with the loyal opposition is that for all its carping, it isn't really opposing. And its loyalty does not appear to be to the Constitution to which members of Congress, like the president, swear their allegiance.

And so we find Sen. Rubio warning us, incredibly, about the dangers of America withdrawing from the world. "The biggest foreign policy problem facing the United States right now," wrote the junior senator from Florida, "is not too much U.S. engagement, but the danger of a world in which we increasingly refuse to lead."

No danger from "too much engagement"? Really? After nearly a dozen years of war, first in Afghanistan and then in Iraq; with military engagements and secret "ops" in numerous other countries; with our military bases and troops spread out all over the world and an army that's stretched nearly to the breaking point; with military spending contributing mightily to debt crisis that a recent [chairman](#) of the joint chiefs of staff has called the greatest threat to our national security; with all of that, Sen. Rubio insists, as though it were self-evidently true, that we face no danger from "too much U.S. engagement" throughout the world.

And what is the "refusal to lead" of which he writes? Our leadership, apparently, is needed at nearly all times and in nearly all places throughout the entire world. "There are few global challenges that can be solved without decisive American leadership," says Rubio. "Afghanistan's stability is important to our nation." What happens in Syria is "integral to our interests." The "rogue nations" of Iran and North Korea have "advanced their nuclear programs on [Obama's] watch." Rubio warns that "what happens in faraway places such as Yemen and Mali might be felt by those living in the heartland of America — and if not today, then very soon." Perhaps the senator should go on a world tour to see if he can't find some acre of land or puddle of water anywhere on the planet that is not "integral to our interests" and vital to our security.

Foreign assistance programs must be "effective and transparent, with meaningful monitoring and evaluation to ensure that taxpayers' money is being put to good use, and that poverty and lack of opportunity do not create new breeding grounds for terror and hatred." Imagine that — a Republican foreign aid program to combat poverty. Shades of LBJ and a Great Society for the Mekong Delta.

The only limits Rubio acknowledges to our world dominion are those imposed by the weak economy, over which Obama is presiding.

America's free enterprise system has given us the means to protect our people and advance the goals of global liberty, prosperity, and safeguarding human rights. Unfortunately, our weak economy has not only made it difficult for people to find well-paying jobs; it has made it easier to give in to the temptation of disengaging from the world.

If Rubio sees a nation that is "disengaging from the world," you have to wonder what nation and what world he is watching. And if he thinks a stagnant economy is all that keeps us from having all the guns and butter we need to go out and remake the world, he may have it exactly backwards. The extent of our overseas commitments both in military activities and foreign aid, has contributed to the drag on our



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economy.

There is a price to be paid, in both blood and treasure for the national hubris Rubio expresses when he declares that few global can be met without “decisive American leadership.” Leaping over the decades. Rubio declares: “Our prosperity depends upon the liberal international order that America has supported since the end of World War II.” His statements on foreign policy lead inevitably to the conclusion that he would expand that “liberal international order.” But our European allies have long since recovered from the devastation of World War II and the United States is in dire financial straits. The [European Union](#) has a larger Gross Domestic Product than the United States. Is Europe not capable of providing for its own defense?

In Asia, [notes](#) columnist Pat Buchanan, South Korea has a population that is double and a GDP that is 40 times that of North Korea under the dictatorship of Kim Jong Un. Why are 28,000 U.S. troops still guarding South Korea from a potential invasion from the North?

“Undeniably, Kim Jong Un runs a tyrannical, wretched regime,” wrote Buchanan. “But its closest neighbors are South Korea, Japan, Russia and China. Why is Kim Jong Un not primarily their problem, rather than ours? Because we are still in Korea 60 years after the armistice brought a halt to the fighting there, the United States may one day face the menace of North Korean missiles.

Photo of Sen. Marco Rubio: AP Images



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