



In TV Interview, Rand Paul Criticizes Some Republican Front-runners

In an interview on CNN's *State of the Union* on December 20, Republican presidential candidate from Kentucky Senator Rand Paul (shown) voiced criticism of several of the leading candidates for the Republican presidential nomination, including current front-runner Donald Trump.



When CNN anchor Jake Tapper asked Paul if he agreed with former Florida Governor Jeb Bush's opinion that Trump "is a jerk for disparaging women, Hispanics, disabled people," and Bush's statement that it is deeply discouraging that Trump remains the front-runner in the polls, Paul replied:

Absolutely deeply disturbing that he's the front-runner. I think he will get wiped in a general election. It would be terrible for any of the ideas of limited government.

I'm still not sure that Donald Trump is for limited government, for balanced budgets. One of the biggest things that he's been for in his last several years is using eminent domain for the government to take private property from one ... private property owner and give it to himself for his casinos and parking lots.

That's not a conservative notion. And, really, most of Donald Trump is nothing more than sort of bits of populism, but no consistent conservative philosophy.

Tapper also asked Paul about Trump's statements on the nuclear triad (three nuclear weapons delivery systems, including ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers), a topic that came up during the last Republican presidential candidates debate. Paul said:

Donald Trump had no clue what the nuclear triad is, and he'd been asked the question previously by Hugh Hewitt on the radio and had no idea what it was. And so now that they have discovered what it is, they're ready to use it?

No, I think this is what is very worrisome about not only Trump, but Christie and others on the stage who are really eager to have war, really eager to show how strong they are. And that gets away from the tradition we have of trying to limit power, trying to be reluctant to go to war. And it also gets to temperament. And that's why it very much worries me to have someone like Donald Trump or a Chris Christie in charge of our nuclear arsenal.

Tapper then moved on to a candidate who seems to have much more in common with Paul than either Trump or Christie, Texas Senator Ted Cruz. Paul stated that, in his view, Cruz "wants to have it both ways." Going on to explain his statement, Paul cited Cruz's past positions opposing citizenship for illegal immigrants but expressing a willingness to grant some illegals a legal status to remain in America. However, noted Paul:



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And now he says never and that he never did it. And so I think he should just admit that he changed his mind, that he used to be for legalization, but he's not anymore.

Furthermore, noted Paul:

He wrote an op-ed with Paul Ryan supporting Obama's trade authority, and now he's against that. He also said when he ran for office that he wouldn't support reauthorization of the Patriot Act, and then he voted to reauthorize the Patriot Act. So, I think, on a number of issues, he wants to have it both ways, depending on which audience he's talking to.

Tapper then asked Paul to comment on a video of Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) saying that Paul "likes politics so much, he's running for two offices at the same time. I mean, he wants to be a senator and president."

Tapper said that he and Paul had discussed such criticism before, and asked the Kentucky senator: "If you haven't performed in the top three positions in Iowa, New Hampshire, or South Carolina or Nevada, do you think at that point you might have to focus your attention ... on your Senate race?"

Paul replied:

Well, you know, the difference between Marco Rubio and I is, I show up for work. He's missed about a third to a half of his votes this year.

And we had the biggest vote of the whole year, voting on a trillion dollars worth of spending, and he didn't show up. So, yes, I think he ought to resign or give his pay back to the taxpayer.

But, as far as I'm concerned, yes, I do need to do well in the early primaries. We're ... in it to win it. We're not in it just to mess around. I'm not in it to place in the lower tier. If we're in the lower tier, obviously, we will reassess.

Considering that infighting among the Republican Party's more conservative potential candidates is likely to be detrimental to the eventual nominee's chances of winning in 2016, it is perhaps fortunate that Tapper also asked Paul to comment on a statement made by the Democratic Party's front-runner. Tapper first played a video clip of former Senator and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton saying: "We now finally are where we need to be. We have a strategy and a commitment to go after ISIS, which is a danger to us, as well as the region."

When Tapper asked Paul what he thought of Clinton's statement, the Kentucky senator disagreed with Clinton's assessment, and yet did not challenge her personally, either:

I think the difficulty is actually trying to get a coalition on the ground that will fight ISIS, because I have said all along the only way to defeat them for the long term is to have Sunni Muslim boots on the ground. And that's easier said than done....

So, really, no, I don't think we quite have ... it in order yet.

A recent cumulative congressional scorecard posted on *The New American's* website as "[The Freedom Index](#)" rated Paul with a 94 percent rating, Cruz with 89 percent, and Rubio with 80 percent. While both Paul and Cruz have the highest ratings of any declared presidential candidates with a congressional voting record, it should be noted that neither *The New American* nor its parent organization, The John Birch Society, has ever endorsed a political candidate. The reason for this is that our organization (and publication) was founded on the principle that politicians, while useful allies in the fight for freedom, are too handicapped by the nature of politics to be completely reliable champions



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