



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on January 24, 2015

Lindsey Graham to “Test the Water” for Presidential Bid

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) says he’s “well qualified” to be president, and he’s already in the process of exploring that possibility.

“I’m going to look long and hard at it,” he said Friday on the Fox News TV show *Fox & Friends*. “I think I’m well qualified for the job but it would be up to the people of my party to make that decision and we have a lot of good choices.”

Graham, 59, is one of the party’s leading military and foreign policy hawks and is a close friend and political ally of the equally hawkish Arizona Sen. John McCain, the party’s nominee for president in 2008. The two are so politically and ideologically aligned that McCain, 78, has jokingly referred to Graham as his “illegitimate son.” The Arizonan has already said Graham has his endorsement if he decides to run.



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If he does, he’ll be in a crowded field. Jeb Bush is already campaigning and Mitt Romney is edging up toward the starting gate for a third run. Chris Christie, Marco Rubio, Rand Paul, Mike Huckabee, Rick Santorum, Bobby Jindal, and Dr. Ben Carson are among the other potential candidates. And the *Des Moines Register* reported Friday that Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker’s political organization has hired Republican strategist David Polyansky, a Texan with lots of experience in Iowa, where candidates have their first shot at winning delegates to the national convention. Polyanski helped guide political newcomer Joni Ernst to her victory in last year’s U.S. Senate election in Iowa, and was with the Huckabee campaign when the former Arkansas governor took first prize in the Iowa caucuses in 2008. Walker has also brought former Republican National Committee Political Director Rick Wiley on board to be the campaign manager if he runs.

“We’re not polling,” Graham said on last Sunday’s *Meet the Press*, “but we set up a testing-the-waters committee under the IRS code that would allow me to look beyond South Carolina as to whether or not a guy like Lindsey Graham has a viable path.” Now starting his third Senate term, Graham has enjoyed success in his native South Carolina, an early primary state and the first of the Southern states in the primary voting. But even some of his supporters in the Palmetto State don’t envision him as the man in the White House.

“He serves the state of South Carolina well and we need him in the U.S. Senate,” veteran Republican strategist Jim Dyke told *NBC News*.

“If he could be the president of national defense —I mean he’d be good at that,” state Senator Katrina Sheahy said. “I just don’t think he’s the president for everything.”



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Graham's hawkish views have not always gone over well with Tea Party conservatives, many of whom tend to be less inclined to follow an aggressive, interventionist foreign policy that often ends up with American taxpayers, present and future, footing the bill for wars of doubtful necessity and years-long efforts in nation-building in foreign lands. Graham was an early and vocal supporter of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, advocated a military intervention in Syria's civil war and criticized Obama's air war over Libya in 2013 for not being early and aggressive enough. It would be difficult, if not impossible to think of an opportunity for U.S. military intervention that has not had the support of Sen. Graham. He seems to see the United States like Atlas, upholding the entire planet. As he told *Meet the Press* host Chuck Todd: "I think the world is falling apart and I've been more right than wrong when it comes to foreign policy."

That depends, no doubt, on who's keeping score.

(To learn how Senator Graham scores in *The New American's* "Freedom Index," which rates every member of the U.S. House and Senate based on the U.S. Constitution, [click here](#).)

Photo of Sen. Lindsay Graham: AP Images



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