



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on December 1, 2014

Senator Cruz Tells Rich Donors He's Not Really "All That Conservative"

In 2012, Mitt Romney was suspected of being a closet moderate. Indeed, while he was a candidate for U.S. senator of Massachusetts in 1994 and governor of the Bay State from 2003 to 2007, it was Romney's conservatism, if there was any, that was kept in the closet. So when he was seeking the GOP presidential nomination in 2008 and again in 2012, he had to assert, again and again, his conservative credentials. And in 2012, he declared, "I'm severely conservative."



But Ted Cruz? Not so much, it seems. The primary campaigns for president in 2016 are still not formally underway, though the White House hopefuls are surely jockeying for position — and money. But winning hearts and minds of GOP primary voters and appealing to the moneyed interests of the fat cat lobbyists are two distinctly different tasks. And while Cruz, the very junior freshman senator from Texas, continues to cultivate the image in public of a right-wing bomb thrower, in the boardroom he is a much tamer creature.

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The *New York Observer* [recently reported on a dinner](#) in New York that the Princeton (and Harvard Law School) alumnus attended with some of the heavy hitters in the world of political campaign finance. At the Zionist Organization of America dinner, Cruz, known for his unwavering devotion to Israel, had a prominent speaking role, and the Tea Party favorite proved to be — "to the shock of some," the *Observer* noted — "rather well-spoken and engaging."

And who are these folks who were ultimately charmed by the usually tough-talking Cruz? Well, prominent attorney Alan Dershowitz was there, along with fundamentalist preacher John Hagee and Home Depot founder Bernie Marcus. The "fancy VIP pre-dinner" also drew Representative Michele Bachmann of Minnesota, Bernstein Global Wealth Management's Jeff Wiesenfeld, public relations guru Ronn Torossian, and a number of rabbis.

Cruz, with an able sense of where the biggest money is, sat next to billionaire casino owner Sheldon Adelson during the dinner and met privately with the party's single biggest donor for two hours at the St. Regis Hotel the following morning. As the *Observer* also reported, Mort Zuckerman, the real estate developer and owner of the *New York Daily News*, hosted a lunch for Cruz before the Zionist backers' dinner.

As reported by the *Observer*, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach got down to political business during the lunch, telling Cruz: "You are arguably the strongest US Senator when it comes to Israel. But if you run, can you win? You're seen as a champion of the tea party. And the media tends to caricature."

"Historically, the media has had two caricatures of Republicans," Cruz replied. "We are either stupid or evil."



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“Sometimes both!” another of the lunch guests suggested.

Cruz coolly assessed his media image and noted that the gatekeepers of conventional wisdom have made a habit of underestimating conservative Republicans.

“Reagan was stupid, according to the media,” Cruz recalled. “George W. Bush, Dan Quayle, stupid. Nixon was evil, Cheney was evil. I sort of take it as a backhanded compliment that they’ve invented a new caricature for me — crazy. At the end of the day, that caricature doesn’t trouble me because it’s fundamentally false. The American people have a history of making up their own minds.”

The goal is to thwart the media *in* the media. And for that you need the money, name exposure, and some significant primary wins to capture the nomination. Reagan is the example Cruz points to again and again. “If you look back, in October of 1980, the American people were told Reagan was a wild-eyed cowboy who’s going to lead us into World War Three. People tuned in and watched the debate and said, ‘You know what? I agree with that guy.’”

Cruz has made his reputation as a conservative firebrand, so it must have surprised at least some of his potential sponsors to hear him say: “I don’t think I’m all that conservative. And it’s interesting. Reagan never once beat his chest and said ‘I’m the most conservative guy who ever lived.’ Reagan said, ‘I’m defending common sense principles — small businesses, small towns.’”

Anyone running for president must appeal to a number of different constituencies, and Ted Cruz, when rubbing shoulders with the movers and shakers of Zionist Jewry, was surely aware he was not addressing the Conservative Political Action Conference. How much it would cost the United States in a Cruz administration, both in money and in future military conflicts, to be ardently pro-Israel and not “all that conservative”? We may yet find out.

In the meantime, Cruz is missing no opportunity to curry favor with pro-Israel voters and especially political donors. After Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel’s resignation was announced, Cruz publicly urged Obama to name former U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman to succeed him. Lieberman, a Democrat and later Independent from Connecticut, is himself Jewish and, like Cruz, unfailingly pro-Israel. With Senators John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Lieberman was one of the “Three Amigos” of the Senate, unfailingly in favor of military interventions whenever and wherever the opportunity arose. All three were eager to go to war with Iraq, and McCain and Graham want more U.S. military action in the Middle East, against ISIS and possibly Iran. If Lieberman is not Obama’s pick to take command at the Pentagon, he might well be President Cruz’s, should Cruz make it that far.

Surely Cruz is doing everything he can to please Jewish and other pro-Israel voters and donors — and the builders and suppliers of the military industrial complex.



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