



Marco Rubio Wants to Make Neocons Cool Again

All-but-announced presidential candidate Jeb Bush caused a stir recently when he [cited his brother](#), former President George W. Bush, as a top policy adviser on the Middle East. But it's fellow Floridian Sen. Marco Rubio who has made a Bush-era neoconservative foreign policy a centerpiece of his bid for the Republican presidential nomination.

On Wednesday afternoon, Rubio will give his first major foreign policy speech as a presidential candidate at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, where he [will champion](#) a neoconservative vision of the United States' role in the world.

“They’re all hawkish,” Christopher Preble of the libertarian Cato Institute [told McClatchy recently](#), referring to the field of GOP presidential contenders. “Just not to the extent he is.”

From his perch on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Rubio has embraced an interventionist foreign policy, spoken out against budget cuts for the military, and emerged recently as [President Obama's chief adversary](#) on normalizing relations with Cuba. Speaking at a conservative gathering in South Carolina last weekend, Rubio articulated a simplistic approach to fighting terrorists, quoting a line from the Liam Neeson action flick *Taken*: “We will look for you, we will find you, and we will kill you.”

It's not surprising that Rubio might out-Bush Jeb Bush when it comes to foreign policy. Last year, the conservative *National Review* [reported](#) that Rubio was a popular presidential prospect among the Bush administration's neoconservative alumni. Meet some of the hawks and former Bush administration officials shaping Rubio's foreign policy views.

JAMIE FLY

Fly, who [joined](#) Rubio's Senate staff in January 2013 as a foreign and national security affairs adviser, held a series of posts in the Bush administration, including jobs with the National Security Council and in the office of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. When Bush left office, Fly was tapped to lead the Foreign Policy Initiative, an organization founded by William Kristol in 2009 to advocate for muscular foreign policy positions and [serve as an incubator](#) of young neocon talent.

His most [notable foreign policy treatise](#) is a 2012 paper, co-authored with neoconservative scholar Gary Schmitt, that advocates for a US attack on Iran—not just a few airstrikes to impede Iran's nuclear program, but a major assault that would also “destabilize the regime”:

a limited military strike would only be a temporary fix... If the United States seriously considers military action, it would be better to plan an operation that not only strikes the nuclear program

but aims to destabilize the regime, potentially resolving the Iranian nuclear crisis once and for all.