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Apr. 12, 2010

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# Why is the GOP establishment so scared of the Pauls - Ron and Rand?"

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### David Boaz

Executive VP, Cato Institute :

Ron Paul is not going to be the Republican nominee for president. Quite aside from his policy positions, his age and the unlikelihood of going straight from the House to the White House guarantee that. So the Republican establishment isn't worried about ending up with what they see as a weak presidential nominee. Rather, they're worried about having a real debate on the size and scope of government and on the appropriate foreign policy for a republic.

Over the past decade, Republicans in Washington have come to adopt a rather Wilsonian approach to foreign policy -- preemptive war, nation building, presidential decision making with no need to consult Congress even to declare war. But they're desperately worried that Republican voters aren't really committed to that neoconservative policy. They're even worried that Republican members of Congress don't buy it. Three weeks ago, at a Cato Institute conference, [Grover Norquist asked three Republican congressmen](#) how many of their colleagues now think the Iraq war was a mistake. The answer: "almost all of us." That's an issue the GOP establishment doesn't want an open debate on.

And that's why, even though Rand Paul would be the strongest voice in the Senate for spending restraint and constitutional government, big-government conservatives in Washington are trying to keep him out of the Senate: Because they desperately fear that a

conservative anti-interventionist leader on foreign policy just might reveal that a lot of Republicans and conservatives around the country don't buy the world-policeman foreign policy the Bush-Cheney administration imposed on the GOP.

Hillary Clinton spoke Friday at the Mitch McConnell Center at the University of Louisville. When the McConnell Center invites Ron or Rand Paul to speak, we'll know that Republicans are willing to debate foreign policy.

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