

Jeb Bush on Foreign Policy Views: 'I Am My Own Man'

Republican Jeb Bush on Wednesday will seek to lay to rest any concerns that his foreign policy views might be influenced by the presidential legacies of his father and brother, saying "I am my own man." Bush, son of former President George H.W. Bush and brother of former President George W. Bush, will address the issue head-on in a speech at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. He will stress the changed global circumstances that await the next president. It will be his first major foray into foreign policy since the former Florida governor announced in December that he is considering a run for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination. Bush, according to speech excerpts released by his political organization, will say he has been lucky to have a father and a brother who have shaped U.S. foreign policy and that he recognizes "my views will often be held up in comparison to theirs – sometimes in contrast to theirs." "I love my father and my brother. I admire their service to the nation and the difficult decisions they had to make. But I am my own man, and my views are shaped by my own thinking and own experiences," he will say. Bush is casting a wide net for advice on national security. An aide provided to Reuters a diverse list of 20 diplomatic and national security veterans who will be providing informal advice to Bush in the coming months. Many of them are from past Republican administrations, including those of his father and brother as well as that of Ronald Reagan. The list includes people representing a wide spectrum of ideological views in the Republican Party, from the pragmatic to the hawkish. It includes James Baker, known for his pragmatism in key roles during the Reagan and George H.W. Bush presidencies, and former World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, a hawk as deputy defense secretary who was an architect of George W. Bush's Iraq policy. Among others are two former secretaries of

Homeland Security, Tom Ridge and Michael Chertoff, former national security adviser Stephen Hadley and a deputy national security adviser, Meghan O'Sullivan, as well as two former CIA directors, Porter Goss and Michael Hayden. With polls showing Bush a front-runner among Republican candidates jockeying for the 2016 nomination, his aim is to set his own course on U.S. foreign policy without getting entangled in a debate about the legacy of his father and older brother. **"Changing World"** Bush has said in the past that he supports his brother's decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003, which could leave him open to attack from Democrats should he win the nomination. His complaint about the recent past in Iraq is that President Barack Obama has let American influence wane in the region. "Each president learns from those who came before, their principles, their adjustments," Bush will say. "One thing we know is this: Every president inherits a changing world, and changing circumstances." Bush's Chicago speech is the second in a series of appearances designed to outline the foundation for what is likely to be a presidential campaign. Two weeks ago in Detroit, he discussed his views on reducing income inequality and bolstering the U.S. economy. His Chicago speech comes as the United States grapples with the threats posed by Islamic State militants and Russia's aggression in eastern Ukraine. Obama has relied heavily on air strikes against Islamic State targets in Syria and Iraq, but the militants retain large swathes of territory in both countries. The United States has joined with European allies to impose sanctions on Russia that have had an impact but have yet to force Moscow to pull back. Bush will criticize Obama's handling of foreign policy and say that American leadership must projected consistently. "Under this administration, we are inconsistent and indecisive," he will say. "We have lost the trust and the confidence of our friends. We definitely no longer inspire fear in our enemies." His list of advisers suggests a willingness to listen to a variety of views from people with long experience, including former World Bank President Robert Zoellick. Others include Paula Dobriansky, a

former undersecretary of state; Kristen Silverberg, a former U.S. ambassador to the European Union; Lincoln Diaz-Balart, who was a long-time member of the House of Representatives from Florida; and John Hannah who was Vice President Dick Cheney's national security adviser. © 2015 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.