

Congressman Ron Paul U.S. House of Representatives September 5, 2002 A Foreign Policy for Peace, Prosperity, and Liberty

Introduction

Mr. Speaker:

Thomas Jefferson spoke for the founders and all our early presidents when he stated: "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none..." which is, "one of the essential principles of our government". The question is: Whatever happened to this principle and should it be restored?

We find the 20th Century was wracked with war, peace was turned asunder, and our liberties were steadily eroded. Foreign alliances and meddling in the internal affairs of other nations became commonplace. On many occasions, involvement in military action occurred through UN resolutions or a presidential executive order, despite the fact that the war power was explicitly placed in the hands of Congress.

Since World War II, nearly 100,000 deaths and over a quarter million wounded (not counting the many thousands that have been affected by Agent Orange and the Persian Gulf War Syndrome) have all occurred without a declaration of war and without a clear-cut victory. The entire 20th century was indeed costly, with over 600,000 killed in battle and an additional million wounded.

If liberty had been truly enhanced during that time, less could be said about the imperfections of the policy. The evidence, however, is clear that we as a people are less free, and the prosperity we still enjoy may be more illusionary than many realize. The innocent victims who have suffered at the hands of our militarism abroad are rarely considered by our government. Yet they may well be a major factor in the hatred now being directed toward America. It is not currently popular to question corporate and banking influence over a foreign policy that replaced the wisdom of Washington and Jefferson. Questioning foreign government influence on our policies, although known about for years, is not acceptable in the politically correct environment

in which we live.

There's little doubt that our role in the world dramatically changed in the 20th century, inexorably evolving from that of strict non-interventionism to that of sole superpower, with the assumption that we were destined to be the world policeman. By the end of the 20th

century, in fact, this occurred. We have totally forgotten that for well over a hundred years we followed the advice of the founders by meticulously avoiding overseas conflicts. Instead we now find ourselves in charge of an American hegemony spread to the four corners of the earth.

Now we have entered the 21st century, and there is not a country in the world that does not either depend on the U.S. for protection, or fear her wrath if they refuse to do her bidding. As the 20th century progressed, American taxpayers were required to finance, with great sacrifices to their pocketbooks and their liberty, the buying of loyalty through foreign aid and intimidation of those countries that did not cooperate.

The question remains, however: Has this change been beneficial to freedom and prosperity here at home, and has it promoted peace and trade throughout the world? Those who justify our interventionist policies abroad argue that the violation of the rule of law is not a problem, considering the *benefits* we receive for maintaining the American empire. But has this really taken into consideration the cost in lives lost, the damage to long-term prosperity, as well as the dollar cost and freedoms we have lost? And what about the future? Has this policy of foreign intervention set the stage for radically changing America- and the world- in ways not yet seen? Were the founders completely off track because they lived in different times, or was the foreign policy they advised based on an *essential principle* of lasting value? Choosing the wrong answer to this question could very well be deadly to the grand experiment in liberty begun in 1776.

The Slippery Road to World Policeman

The transition from non-interventionism to our current role as world arbiter in all conflicts was insidious and fortuitous. In the early part of the 20th century, the collapse of the British Empire left a vacuum, which was steadily filled by a US presence. In the latter part of the century, the results of World War II and the collapse of the Soviet system propelled us into our current role. Throughout most of the 20th century, it was our competition with the Soviets that prompted our ever-expanded presence around the world.

We are where we are today almost by default. But does that justify interventionism or prove it is in our best interest?

Disregarding for the moment the moral and constitutional arguments against foreign intervention, a strong case can be made against it for other reasons. It is clear that one intervention begets another. The first problem is rarely solved, and new ones are created. Indeed, in foreign affairs a slippery slope exists. In recent years, we too often slipped into war through the back door, with the purpose rarely defined or understood and the need for victory ignored.

A restrained effort of intervention frequently explodes into something that we did not foresee. Policies end up doing the opposite of their intended purpose- with unintended consequences. The result is that the action taken turns out to actually be detrimental to our national security interests. Yet no effort is made to challenge the fundamental principle behind our foreign policy. It is this failure to adhere to a set of principles that has allowed us to slip into this role, and if unchallenged, could well undo the liberties we all cherish.

Throughout history, there has always been a great temptation for rulers to spread their influence and pursue empire over liberty. Few resist this temptation to power. There always seems to be a natural inclination to yield to this historic human passion. Could it be that progress and civilization and promoting freedom require ignoring this impulse to control others, as the founders of this great nation advised?

Historically, the driving force behind world domination is usually an effort to control wealth. The Europeans were searching for gold when they came to the Americas. Now it's our turn to seek control over the black gold which drives much of what we do today in foreign affairs. Competing with the Soviet Union prompted our involvement in areas of the world where the struggle for the balance of power was the sole motivating force.

The foreign policy of the 20th century replaced the policy endorsed by all the early presidents. This permitted our steadily growing involvement overseas in an effort to control the world's commercial interests, with a special emphasis on oil.

Our influence in the Middle East evolved out of concern for the newly created state of Israel in

1947, and our desire to secure control over the flow of oil in that region. Israel's needs and Arab oil have influenced our foreign policy for more than a half a century.

In the 1950s, the CIA installed the Shah in Iran. It was not until the hostage crisis of the late 1970s that the unintended consequences of this became apparent. This generated Iranian hatred of America and led to the takeover by the reactionary Khoumini and the Islamic fundamentalists. It caused greater regional instability than we anticipated. Our meddling in the internal affairs of Iran was of no benefit to us and set the stage for our failed policy in dealing with Iraq.

We allied ourselves in the 1980s with Iraq in its war with Iran, and assisted Saddam Hussein in his rise to power. As recent reports reconfirm, we did nothing to stop Hussein's development of chemical and biological weapons and at least indirectly assisted in their development. Now, as a consequence of that needless intervention, we're planning a risky war to remove him from power. And as usual, the probable result of such an effort will be something our government does not anticipate- like a takeover by someone much worse. As bad as Hussein is, he's an enemy of the Al Qaeda, and someone new may well be a close ally of the Islamic radicals.

Although our puppet dictatorship in Saudi Arabia has lasted for many decades, it's becoming shakier every day. The Saudi people are not exactly friendly toward us, and our military presence on their holy soil is greatly resented. This contributes to the radical fundamentalist hatred directed toward us. Another unfavorable consequence to America, such as a regime change not to our liking, could soon occur in Saudi Arabia. It is not merely a coincidence that 15 of the 9/11 terrorists are Saudis.

The Persian Gulf War, fought without a declaration of war, is in reality still going on. It looks now like 9/11 may well have been a battle in that war, perpetrated by fanatical guerillas. It indicates how seriously flawed our foreign policy is. In the 1980s, we got involved in the Soviet/Afghan war and actually sided with the forces of Osama bin Laden, helping him gain power. This obviously was an alliance of no benefit to the United States, and it has now come back to haunt us. Our policy for years was to encourage Saudi Arabia to oppose communism by financing and promoting Islamic fundamentalism. Surely the shortcomings of that policy are now evident to everyone.

Clinton's bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan on the eve of his indictment over Monica Lewinsky shattered a Taliban plan to expel Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan. Clinton's bombing of

Baghdad on the eve of his impeachment hardly won any converts to our cause or reassured Muslim people in the Middle East of a balanced American policy.

The continued bombing of Iraq over these past 12 years, along with the deadly sanctions resulting in hundreds of thousands of needless Iraqi civilian deaths, has not been beneficial to our security. And it has been used as one of the excuses for recruiting fanatics ready to sacrifice their lives in demonstrating their hatred toward us.

Essentially all Muslims see our policy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as being openly favorable toward Israel and in opposition to the Palestinians. It is for this reason they hold us responsible for Palestinian deaths, since all the Israeli weapons are from the United States. Since the Palestinians don't even have an army and must live in refugee camps, one should understand why the animosity builds, even if our pro-Israeli position can be explained.

There is no end in sight. Since 9/11, our involvement in the Middle East and Saudi Arabia has grown significantly. Though we can badger those countries- whose leaders depend upon us to keep them in power- to stay loyal to the United States, the common people of the region become more alienated. Our cozy relationship with the Russians may not be as long-lasting as our current administration hopes, considering the \$40 billion trade deal recently made between Russia and Saddam Hussein. It's more than a bit ironic that we find the Russians now promoting free trade as a solution to a difficult situation while we're promoting war.

This continuous escalation of our involvement overseas has been widespread. We've been in Korea for more than 50 years. We have promised to never back away from the China-Taiwan conflict over territorial disputes. Fifty-seven years after World War II, we still find our military spread throughout Europe and Asia.

And now, the debate rages over whether our national security requires that we, for the first time, escalate this policy of intervention to include "anticipatory self-defense and preemptive war." If our interventions of the 20th century led to needless deaths, unwinnable wars, and continuous unintended consequences, imagine what this new doctrine is about to unleash on the world.

Our policy has prompted us to announce that our CIA will assassinate Saddam Hussein whenever it gets the chance and that the government of Iraq is to be replaced. Evidence now

has surfaced that the United Nations inspection teams in the 1990s definitely included American CIA agents who were collecting information on how to undermine the Iraqi government and continue with the routine bombing missions. Why should there be a question of why Saddam Hussein might not readily accept UN inspectors without some type of assurances? Does anybody doubt that control of Iraqi oil supplies, second only to Saudi Arabia, is the reason U.S. policy is belligerent toward Saddam Hussein? If our goal is honestly to remove dictators around the world, then this is the beginning of an endless task.

In the transition from the original American foreign policy of peace, trade, and neutrality to that of world policeman, we have sacrificed our sovereignty to world government organizations, such as the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO. To further confuse and undermine our position, we currently have embarked on a policy of unilateralism within these world organizations. This means we accept the principle of globalized government when it pleases us, but when it doesn't, we ignore it for the sake of our own interests.

Acting in our own interest is to be applauded, but what we're getting is not a good alternative to a one-world government. We don't get our sovereignty back, yet we continue to subject ourselves to a great potential financial burden and loss of liberty as we shift from a national government, with constitutional protection of our rights, to an international government, where our citizens' rights are threatened by treaties we haven't ratified, like the Kyoto and International Criminal Court treaties. We cannot depend on controlling the world government at some later date, even if we seem to be able to do that now.

The unilateralist approach of dominating world leaders and arbitrarily ignoring certain mandates- something we can do with impunity because of our intimidating power- serves only to further undermine our prestige and acceptability throughout the world. And this includes the Muslim countries as well as our European friends. This merely sets the stage for both our enemies and current friends to act in concert against our interests when the time comes. This is especially true if we become financially strapped and our dollar is sharply weakened and we are in a much more vulnerable bargaining position.

Unilateralism within a globalist approach to government is the worst of all choices. It ignores national sovereignty, dignifies one-world government, and places us in the position of demanding dictatorial powers over the world community. Demanding the right to set all policy and exclude ourselves from jurisdictional restraints sows the seeds of future discontent and hostility.

The downside is we get all the bills, risk the lives of our people without cause, and make ourselves the target for every event that goes badly. We get blamed for the unintended, unforeseen consequences and become the target of terrorists that evolve from the radicalized fringes.

Long-term, foreign interventionism does not serve our interests. Tinkering on the edges of our current policy will not help. An announced policy of support for globalist government, assuming the financial and military role of world policeman, maintaining an American world empire, while flaunting unilateralism, is a recipe for disaster. US unilateralism is a far cry from the non-intervention that the founders advised.

The Principle Behind Foreign Policy

The term "foreign policy" does not exist in the Constitution. All members of the federal government have sworn to uphold the Constitution, and should do only those things that are clearly authorized. Careful reading of the Constitution reveals Congress has a lot more responsibility than the President in dealing with foreign affairs. The President is the Commander-in-Chief, but can't declare war or finance military action without explicit congressional approval. A good starting point would be for Congress to assume the responsibility given it and to make sure the executive branch does not usurp any authority explicitly granted to Congress.

A proper foreign policy of non-intervention is built on friendship with other nations, free trade, and open travel, maximizing the exchanges of goods and services and ideas. Nations that trade with each other are definitely less likely to fight against each other. Unnecessary bellicosity and jingoism is detrimental to peace and prosperity, and incites unnecessary confrontation. And yet, today, that's about all we hear coming from the politicians and the media pundits who are so anxious for this war against Iraq.

We should avoid entangling alliances and stop meddling in the internal affairs of other nations- no matter how many special interests demand otherwise. The entangling alliances that we should avoid include the complex alliances in the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO. One-world government goals are anathema to non-intervention and free trade. The temptation to settle disputes and install better governments abroad is fraught with great danger and many uncertainties.

Protecting our national sovereignty and guaranteeing constitutional protection of our citizens' rights are crucial. Respecting the sovereignty of other nations, even when we're in disagreement with some of their policies, is also necessary. Changing others then becomes a job of persuasion and example- not force and intimidation- just as it is in trying to improve personal moral behavior of our fellow citizens here at home.

Defending our country from outside attack is legitimate and is of the highest priority. Protecting individual liberty should be our goal. This does not mean, however, that our troops should follow our citizens or their investments throughout the world. While foreign visitors should be welcomed, no tax-supported services should be provided. Citizenship should be given with caution, and not automatically by merely stepping over a national boundary for the purpose of giving birth.

A successful and prosperous society comes from such policies and is impossible without a sound free-market economy, one not controlled by a central bank. Avoiding trade wars, devaluations, inflations, deflations, and disruption of free trade with protectionist legislation is impossible under a system of international trade dependent on fluctuating fiat currencies controlled by world central banks and influenced by powerful financial interests. Instability in trade is one of the prime causes of creating conditions that lead to war.

The basic moral principle underpinning a non-interventionist foreign policy is that of rejecting the initiation of force against others. It is based on non-violence and friendship unless attacked, self-determination, and self-defense while avoiding confrontation, even when we disagree with the way other countries run their affairs. It simply means that we should mind our own business and not be influenced by special interests that have an ax to grind or benefits to gain by controlling our foreign policy. Manipulating our country into conflicts that are none of our business and unrelated to national security provides no benefits to us, while exposing us to great risks financially and militarily.

What Would a Foreign Policy For Peace Look Like?

Our troops would be brought home, systematically but soon. Being in Europe and Japan for over 50 years is long enough. The failure in Vietnam resulted in no occupation and a more westernized country now doing business with the United States. There's no evidence that the military approach in Vietnam was superior to that of trade and friendship. The lack of trade and the imposition of sanctions have not served us well in Cuba or in the Middle East. The mission

for our Coast Guard would change if our foreign policy became non-interventionist. They, too, would come home, protect our coast, and stop being the enforcers of bureaucratic laws that either should not exist or should be a state function.

All foreign aid would be discontinued. Most evidence shows that this money rarely helps the poor, but instead solidifies power in the hands of dictators. There's no moral argument that can justify taxing poor people in this country to help rich people in poor countries. Much of the foreign aid, when spent, is channeled back to weapons manufacturers and other special interests in the United States who are the strong promoters of these foreign-aid expenditures. Yet it's all done in the name of humanitarian causes.

A foreign policy of freedom and peace would prompt us to give ample notice before permanently withdrawing from international organizations that have entangled us for over a half a century. US membership in world government was hardly what the founders envisioned when writing the Constitution. The principle of Marque and Reprisal would be revived and specific problems such as terrorist threats would be dealt with on a contract basis incorporating private resources to more accurately target our enemies and reduce the chances of needless and endless war. This would help prevent a continual expansion of conflicts into areas not relating to any immediate threat. By narrowing the target, there's less opportunity for special interests to manipulate our foreign policy to serve the financial needs of the oil and military-weapon industries.

The Logan Act would be repealed, thus allowing maximum freedom of our citizens to volunteer to support their war of choice. This would help diminish the enthusiasm for wars the proponents have used to justify our world policies and diminish the perceived need for a military draft.

If we followed a constitutional policy of non-intervention, we would never have to entertain the aggressive notion of preemptive war based on speculation of what a country might do at some future date. Political pressure by other countries to alter our foreign policy for their benefit would never be a consideration. Commercial interests and our citizens investing overseas could not expect our armies to follow them and protect their profits. A non-interventionist foreign policy would not condone subsidies to our corporations through programs like the Export/Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. These programs guarantee against losses, while the risk takers want our military to protect their investments from political threats. This current flawed policy removes the tough decisions of when to invest in foreign countries and diminishes the pressure on those particular countries to clean up their political acts in order to entice foreign capital to move into their country. Today's foreign policy encourages bad investments. Ironically this is all done in the name of free trade and capitalism, but it does more

to export jobs and businesses than promote free trade. And yet when it fails, capitalism and freedom are blamed.

A non-interventionist foreign policy would go a long way toward preventing 9/11 type attacks. The Department of Homeland Security would be unnecessary, and the military, along with less bureaucracy in our intelligence-gathering agencies, could instead provide the security the new department is supposed to provide. A renewed respect for gun ownership and responsibility for defending one's property would provide additional protection against potential terrorists.

Conclusion

There are many reasons why a policy of peace is superior to a policy of war. The principle that we do not have the moral authority to forcibly change governments in foreign lands just because we don't approve of their shortcomings should be our strongest argument- but rarely today is a moral argument in politics worth much.

The practical argument against intervention, because of its record of failure, should certainly prompt all thoughtful people to reconsider what we have been doing for the past many decades.

We should all be aware that war is a failure of relationship between foreign powers. Since this is such a serious matter, our American tradition as established by the founders made certain that the executive is subservient to the more democratically responsive legislative branch on the issue of war. Therefore, no war is ever to be the prerogative of a president through his unconstitutional use of executive orders, nor should it ever be something where the legal authority comes from an international body such as NATO or the United Nations. Up until 50 years ago, this had been the American tradition.

Non-intervention prevents the unexpected and unintended consequences that inevitably result from well-intended meddling in the affairs of others.

Countries like Switzerland and Sweden who promote neutrality and non-intervention have benefited for the most part by remaining secure and free of war over the centuries.

Non-intervention consumes a lot less of the nation's wealth- and with less wars, a higher standard of living for all citizens results. But this, of course, is not attractive to the military-industrial complex, which enjoys a higher standard of living at the expense of the taxpayer when a policy of intervention and constant war preparation is carried out.

Wisdom, morality, and the Constitution are very unlikely to invade the minds of the policy makers that control our foreign affairs. We have institutionalized foreign intervention over the past 100 years through the teachings of all our major universities and the propaganda that the media spews out. The powerful influence over our policy, both domestic and foreign, is not soon going to go away.

I'm convinced however, that eventually restraint in our interventions overseas will be guided by a more reasonable constitutional policy. Economic reality will dictate it. Although political pressure in times of severe economic downturn and domestic strife encourage planned distractions overseas, these adventures always cause economic harm due to the economic costs. When the particular country or empire involved overreaches, as we are currently doing, national bankruptcy and a severely weakened currency call the whole process to a halt.

The Soviet system armed with an aggressive plan to spread its empire worldwide collapsed, not because we attacked it militarily, but for financial and economic reasons. They no longer could afford it, and the resources and wealth that it drained finally turned the people against its authoritarian rule.

Maintaining an overseas empire is incompatible with the American tradition of liberty and prosperity. The financial drain and the antagonism that it causes with our enemies, and even our friends, will finally force the American people to reject the policy outright. There will be no choice. Gorbachev just walked away and Yeltsin walked in, with barely a ripple. A non-violent revolution of unbelievable historic magnitude occurred and the Cold War ended. We are not immune from such a similar change.

This Soviet collapse ushered in the age of unparalleled American dominance over the entire world, and along with it allowed the new expanded hot war between the West and the Muslim East. All the hostility directed toward the West built up over the centuries between the two factions is now directed toward the United States. We are now the only power capable of paying for and literally controlling the Middle East and its cherished wealth, and we have not hesitated. Iraq, with its oil and water and agricultural land, is a prime target of our desire to further expand

our dominion. The battle is growing more tense with our acceptance and desire to control the Caspian Sea oil riches. But Russia, now licking its wounds and once again accumulating wealth, will not sit idly by and watch the American empire engulf this region. When time runs out for us, we can be sure Russia will once again be ready to fight for control of all those resources in countries adjacent to her borders. And expect the same for China and India. And who knows, maybe one day even Japan will return to the ancient art of using force to occupy the cherished territories in her region of the world.

The most we can hope for will be, once the errors of our ways are acknowledged and we can no longer afford our militarism, we will reestablish the moral principle that underpins the policy of "peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none." Our modern-day war hawks do not respect this American principle, nor do they understand how the love of liberty drove the founders in their great battle against tyranny.

We must prepare for the day when our financial bankruptcy and the failure of our effort at world domination are apparent. The solution to such a crisis can be easily found in our Constitution and in our traditions. But ultimately, the love of liberty can only come from a change in the hearts and minds of the people and with an answered prayer for the blessings of divine intervention.