

POTENTIAL FOR WAR (House of Representatives - February 08, 2001)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I have asked for this special order today to express my concerns for our foreign policy of interventionism that we have essentially followed throughout the 20th century.

Mr. Speaker, foreign military interventionism, a policy the U.S. has followed for over 100 years, encourages war and undermines peace. Even with the good intentions of many who support this policy, it serves the interests of powerful commercial entities.

Perpetual conflicts stimulate military spending. Minimal and small wars too often get out of control and cause more tragedy than originally anticipated. Small wars, like the Persian Gulf War, are more easily tolerated, but the foolishness of an out of-control war like Vietnam is met with resistance from a justifiably aroused Nation.

But both types of conflicts result from the same flawed foreign policy of foreign interventionism. Both types of conflict can be prevented. National security is usually cited to justify our foreign involvement, but this excuse distracts from the real reason we venture so far from home. Influential commercial interests dictate policy of when and where we go. Persian Gulf oil obviously got more attention than genocide in Rwanda.

If one were truly concerned about our security and enhancing peace, one would always opt for a less militaristic policy. It is not a coincidence that U.S. territory and U.S. citizens are the most vulnerable in the world to terrorist attacks.

Escalation of the war on terrorism and not understanding its causes is a dangerous temptation. Not only does foreign interventionism undermine chances for peace and prosperity, it undermines personal liberty. War and preparing for war must always be undertaken at someone's expense. Someone must pay the bills with higher taxes, and someone has to be available to pay with their lives.

It is never the political and industrial leaders who promote the policy who pay. They are the ones who reap the benefits, while at the same time arguing for the policy they claim is designed to protect freedom and prosperity for the very ones being victimized.

Many reasons given for our willingness to police the world sound reasonable: We need to protect our oil; we need to stop cocaine production in Colombia; we need to bring peace in the Middle East; we need to punish our adversaries; we must respond because we are the sole superpower, and it is our responsibility to maintain world order; it is our moral obligation to settle disputes; we must follow up on our dollar diplomacy after sending foreign aid throughout the world. In the old days, it was, we need to stop the spread of communism.

The excuses are endless. But it is rarely mentioned that the lobbyists and the proponents of foreign intervention are the weapons manufacturers, the oil companies, and the recipients of huge contracts for building infrastructures in whatever far corners of the Earth we send our troops. Financial interests have a lot at stake, and it is important for them that the United States maintains its empire.

Not infrequently, ethnic groups will influence foreign policy for reasons other than preserving our security. This type of political pressure can at times be substantial and emotional. We often try to please too many, and by doing so support both sides of conflicts that have raged for centuries. In the end, our effort can end up unifying our adversaries while alienating our friends.

Over the past 50 years, Congress has allowed our Presidents to usurp the prerogatives the Constitution explicitly gave only to the Congress. The term "foreign policy" is never mentioned in the Constitution, and it was never intended to be monopolized by the President. Going to war was to be strictly a legislative function, not an executive one. Operating foreign policy by executive orders and invoking unratified treaties is a slap in the face to the rule of law and our republican form of government. But that is the way it is currently being done.

U.S. policy over the past 50 years has led to endless illegal military interventions, from Korea to our ongoing war with Iraq and military occupation in the Balkans. Many Americans have died and many others have been wounded or injured or have just simply been forgotten.

Numerous innocent victims living in foreign lands have died as well from the bombings and the blockades we have imposed. They have been people with whom we have had no fight but who were trapped between the bad policy of their own leaders and our eagerness to demonstrate our prowess in the world. Over 500,000 Iraqi children have reportedly died as a consequence of our bombing and denying food and medicine by our embargo.

For over 50 years, there has been a precise move towards one-world government at the expense of our own sovereignty. Our Presidents claim that our authority to wage wars come from the United Nations or NATO resolution, in contradiction to our Constitution and everything our Founding Fathers believed.

U.S. troops are now required to serve under foreign commanders and wear U.N. insignias. Refusal to do so prompts a court-martial.

The past President, before leaving office, signed the 1998 U.N.-Rome treaty indicating our willingness to establish an international criminal court. This gives the U.N. authority to enforce global laws against Americans if ratified by the Senate. But even without ratification, we have gotten to the point where treaties of this sort can be imposed on non-participating nations.

Presidents have, by executive orders, been willing to follow unratified treaties in the past. This is a very dangerous precedent. We already accept the international trade court, the WTO. Trade wars are fought with the court's supervision, and we are only too ready to rewrite our tax laws as the WTO dictates.

The only portion of the major tax bill at the end of the last Congress to be rushed through for the President's signature was the foreign sales corporation changes dictated to us by the WTO.

For years the U.S. has accepted the international financial and currency management of the IMF, another arm of one-world government.

The World Bank serves as the distributor of international welfare, of which the U.S. taxpayer is the biggest donor. This organization helps carry out a policy of taking money from poor Americans and giving it to rich foreign leaders, with kickbacks to some of our international corporations.

Support for the World Bank, the IMF, the international criminal court, always comes from the elites and almost never from the common man. These programs, run by the international institutions, are supposed to help the poor, but they never do. It is all a charade. If left unchecked, they will bankrupt us and encourage more world government mischief.

It is the responsibility of Congress to curtail this trend by reestablishing the principles of the U.S. Constitution and our national sovereignty. It is time for the United States to give up its membership in all these international organizations.

Our foreign policy has led to an incestuous relationship between our military and Hollywood. In December, our Secretary of Defense used \$295,000 of taxpayers' money to host a party in Los Angeles for Hollywood bigwigs. Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said it was well worth it. The purpose was to thank the movie industry for putting the military in a good light.

A similar relationship has been reported with TV stations licensed by the U.S. Government. They have been willing to accept suggestions from the government to place political messages in their programming. This is a dangerous trend, mixing government and the media. Here is where real separation is needed.

Our policy should change for several reasons. It is wrong for our foreign policy to serve any special interest, whether it is for financial benefits, ethnic pressures, or some contrived moral imperative. Too often the policy leads to an unintended consequence, and more people are killed and more property damaged than was intended.

Controlling world events is never easy. It is better to avoid the chance of one bad decision leading to another. The best way to do that is to follow the advice of the Founders and avoid all entangling alliances, and pursue a policy designed solely to protect U.S. national security interests.

The two areas in the world that currently present the greatest danger to the United States are Colombia and the Middle East. For decades we have been engulfed in the ancient wars of the Middle East by subsidizing and supporting both sides. This policy is destined to fail. We are in great danger of becoming involved in a vicious war for oil, as well as being drawn into a religious war that will not end in our lifetime.

The potential for war in this region is great, and the next one could make the Persian Gulf War look small. Only a reassessment of our entire policy will keep us from being involved in a needless and dangerous war in this region.

It will be difficult to separate any involvement in the Balkans from a major conflict that breaks out in the Middle East. It is impossible for us to maintain a policy that both supports Israel and provides security for western-leaning secular Arab leaders, while at the same time taunting the Islamic fundamentalists. Push will come to shove, and when that happens in the midst of an economic crisis, our resources will be stretched beyond the limit. This must be prevented.

Our involvement in Colombia could easily escalate into a regional war. For over 100 years, we have been involved in the affairs of Central America, but the recent escalation of our presence in Colombia is inviting trouble for us. Although the justification for our enhanced presence is the war on drugs, protecting U.S. oil interests and selling helicopters are the real reasons for the last year's \$1.3 billion emergency funding.

Already neighboring countries have expressed concern about our presence in Colombia. The U.S. policymakers gave their usual response by promising more money and support to the neighboring countries that feel threatened.

Venezuela, rich in oil, is quite nervous about our enhanced presence in the region. Their foreign minister stated that if any of our ships enter the Gulf of Venezuela, they will be expelled. This statement was prompted by an overly aggressive U.S. Coast Guard vessel intrusion into

Venezuela's territorial waters on a drug expedition. I know of no one who believes this expanded and insane drug war will do anything to dampen drug usage in the United States, yet it will cost us plenty.

Too bad our political leaders cannot take a hint. The war effort in Colombia is small now, but under current conditions, it will surely escalate. This is a 30-year-old civil war being fought in the jungles of South America. We are unwelcome by many, and we ought to have enough sense to stay out of it.

Recently, new policy has led to the spraying of herbicides to destroy the coca fields. It has already been reported that the legal crops in the nearby fields have been destroyed, as well. This is no way to win friends around the world.

There are many other areas of the world where we ought to take a second look and then come home. Instead of bullying the European Union for wanting to have their own rapid deployment force, we should praise them and bring our troops home.

World War II has been over for 55 years. It is time we look at Korea and ask why we have to broker, with the use of American dollars and American soldiers, the final settlement between North and South Korea. Taiwan and China are now trading and investing in each other's country. Travel restrictions have been recently liberalized. It is time for us to let the two of them settle their border dispute.

We continue to support Turkey with dollars and weapons. We once supported Iraq with the same. Now, we permit Turkey, armed with American weapons, to kill Kurds in Iraq, while we bomb the Iraqis if they do the same. It makes no sense.

Selling weapons to both factions of almost all the major conflicts of the past 50 years reveals that our involvement is more about selling weapons than spreading the message of freedom. That message can never be delivered through force to others over their objection. Only a policy of peace, friendship, trade, and our setting a good example can inspire others to look to what once was the American tradition of liberty and justice for all. Entangling alliances will not do it. It is time for Congress and the American people to wake up.

The political system of interventionism always leads to social discord. Interventionism is based on relative rights, majoritarianism, and disrespect for the Constitution. Degenerating moral standards of the people encourages and feeds on this system of special interest favoritism, all of which contributes to the friction.

Thomas Jefferson was worried that future generations might one day squander the liberties the American Revolution secured. Writing about future generations, Jefferson wondered if, in the enjoyment of plenty, they would lose the memory of freedom. He believed material abundance without character is the path to destruction.

The challenge to America today is clearly evident. We lack character. And we also suffer from the loss of respect, understanding, and faith in the liberty that offers so much. The American Republic has been transformed and only a remnant remains. It appears that, in the midst of plenty, we have forgotten about freedom.

We have just gone through a roaring decade with many Americans enjoying prosperity beyond their wildest dreams. Because this wealth was not always earned and instead resulted from borrowing, speculation and inflation, the correction that is to come will contribute to the social discord already inherent in a system of government interventionism.

If indeed the economy enters a severe recession, which is highly possible, it will compound the problems characteristic of a system that encourages government supervision over all that we do.

Conflicts between classes, races and ethnic groups and even generations are already apparent. This is a consequence of pitting workers and producers against the moochers and the special-interest rich. Divvying up half of the GDP through a process of confiscatory taxation invites trouble. It is

more easily tolerated when wealth abounds. But when the economy slips, quiescent resentment quickly turns to noisy confrontation.

Those who feel slighted become more demanding at the same time resources are diminished. But the system of government we have become accustomed to have has for decades taken over responsibilities that have never intended to be the prerogative of the Federal Government under the Constitution.

Although mostly well-intended, the efforts at social engineering have caused significant damage to our constitutional republic and have resulted in cynicism toward all politicians.

Our presidents now are elected by less than 20 percent of those old enough to vote. Government is perceived to be in the business of passing out favors rather than protecting individual liberty. The majority of the people are made up of independents and non-voters.

The most dramatic change in the 20th century social attitudes was the acceptance of abortion. This resulted from a change in personal morality that then led to legislation nationally through the courts and only occurred by perverting our constitutional system of government.

The Federal costs should never have been involved, but the Congress compounded the problem by using taxpayers' funds to perform abortions both here and overseas. Confrontation between the pro-life and pro-abortion forces is far from over. If governments were used only to preserve life rather than act as an accomplice in the taking of life, this conflict would not nearly be so rancorous.

Once a society and a system of laws deny the importance of life, privacy and personal choices are difficult to protect. Since abortions have become commonplace, it has been easier to move the issue of active euthanasia to center stage. As Government budgets become more compromised, economic arguments will surely be used to justify reasonable savings by not wasting vital resources on the elderly.

Issues like abortion and euthanasia do not disappear in a free society but are handled quite differently. Instead of condoning or paying for such act, the State is responsible for protecting life rather than participating in taking it. This is quite a different role for Government than we currently have.

We can expect the pro-life and pro-abortion and euthanasia groups to become more vocal and confrontational in time as long as Government is used to commit acts that a large number of people find abhorrent. Partial-birth abortion dramatize the issue at hand and clearly demonstrates how close we are to legalizing infanticide. This problem should be dealt with by the States and without the Federal courts or the U.S. Congress involvement.

The ill-conceived drug war of the past 30 years has caused great harm to our society. It has undermined privacy and challenged the constitutional rights of all our citizens. The accelerated attack on drug usage seen since the early 1970s has not resulted in any material benefit. Over \$300 billion has been spent on this war, and we are less free and poorer because of it. Civil liberties are sacrificed in all wars, both domestic and foreign.

It is clear that even if it were a legitimate function for Government to curtail drug usage, eliminating bad habits through Government regulation is not achievable. Like so much else the Government tries to do, the harm done is not always evenly distributed. Some groups suffer more than others, further compounding the problem by causing dissention and distrust.

Anthony Lewis of The New York Times reported last year, "The 480,000 men and women now in U.S. prisons on

drug charges are 100,000 more than all prisoners in the European Union, where the population is 100 million more than ours."

There are 10 times the number of prisoners for drug offenses than there were in 1980, and 80 percent of the drug arrests are for nonviolent possession. In spite of all the money spent and energy wasted, drug usage continues at a record pace.

Some day we must wake up and realize the Federal drug war is a farce, it has failed, and we must change our approach.

As bad as drug addiction is and the harm it causes, it is minuscule compared to the dollar cost, the loss of liberty and social conflict that results from our ill-advised drug war.

Mandatory drug sentencing have done a great deal of harm by limiting the discretion that judges could use in sentencing victims in this drug war. Congress should repeal or change these laws just as we found it beneficial to modify seizure and for forfeiture laws 2 years ago. The drug laws, I am sure, were never meant to be discriminatory. Yet they are.

In Massachusetts, 82.9 percent of the drug offenders are minorities, but they make up only 9 percent of the State population. The fact that crack-cocaine users are more likely to land in prison than powder-cocaine users and with harsher sentences discriminates against black Americans.

A wealthy suburbanite caught using drugs is much less likely to end up in prison than someone from the inner city. This inequity adds to the conflict between races and between the poor and the police. And it is so unnecessary.

There are no documented benefits from the drug war. Even if reduction in drug usage could have been achieved, the cost in dollars and loss of liberty would never have justified it. But we do not have that to deal with since drug usage continues to get worse.

In addition, we have all the problems associated with the drug war. The effort to diminish the use of drugs and to improve the personal habits of some of our citizens has been the excuse to undermine our freedoms.

Ironically, we spend hundreds of billions of dollars waging this dangerous war on drugs while Government educational policies promote a huge and dangerous overusage of Ritalin. This makes no sense whatsoever.

Seizure and forfeiture laws, clearly in violation of the Constitution, have served as a terrible incentive for many police departments to raise money for law enforcement projects outside the normal budgeting process. Nationalizing the police force for various reasons is a trend that should frighten all Americans. The drug war has been the most important factor in this trend.

Medicinal use of illegal drugs, in particular, marijuana, has been prohibited and greater human

suffering has resulted. Imprisoning a person who is dying from cancer and AIDS for using his own self-cultivated marijuana is absolutely bizarre and cruel.

All addiction, alcohol and illegal drugs, should be seen as a medical problem, not a legal one. Improving behavior just for the sake of changing unpopular habits never works. It should never be the responsibility of government to do so. When government attempts to do this, the government and its police force become the criminals.

When someone under the influence of drugs, alcohol, also a drug, or even from the lack of sleep, causes injury to another, local law enforcement officials have a responsibility. This is a far cry from the Justice Department using Army tanks to bomb the Davidians because Federal agents claimed an amphetamine lab was possibly on the premises.

An interventionist government, by its nature, uses any excuse to know what the people are doing. Drug laws are used to enhance the IRS agent's ability to collect every dime owed the government. These laws are used to pressure Congress to use more dollars for foreign military operations in places, such as Colombia. Artificially high drug prices allow governments to clandestinely participate in the drug trade to raise funds to fight the secret controversial wars with off-budget funding. Both our friends and foes depend on the drug war at times for revenue to pursue their causes, which frequently are the same as ours.

The sooner we wake up to this seriously flawed approach to fighting drug usage, the better.

The notion that the Federal Government has an obligation to protect us from ourselves drives the drug war. But this idea also drives the do-gooders in Washington to involve themselves in every aspect of our lives.

American citizens cannot move without being constantly reminded by consumer advocates, environmentalists, safety experts and bureaucratic

busybodies what they can or cannot do.

Once government becomes our protector, there are no limits. Federal regulations dictate the amount of water in

our commodes and the size and shape of our washing machines. Complicated USDA regulations dictate the size of the holes in Swiss cheese. We cannot even turn off our automobile air bags when they present a danger to a child without Federal permission.

Riding in a car without a seatbelt may be unwise, but should it be a federal crime? Why not make us all wear rib pads and football helmets that would reduce serious injuries and save many dollars for the government health system.

Regulations on holistic medicine, natural remedies, herbs and vitamins are now commonplace and continue to grow. Who gave the Government the right to make these personal decisions for us? Are the people really so ignorant that only the politicians and bureaucrats can make these delicate decisions for them?

Today, if a drug shows promise for treating a serious illness and both patient and doctor would like to try it on an experimental basis, permission can be given only by the FDA and only after much begging. Permission frequently is not granted, even if the dying patient is pleading to take the risk.

The Government is not anxious to give up any of its power to make these decisions. People in Government think that is what they are supposed to do for the good of the people. Free choice is what freedom is all about and it means freedom to take risks, as well.

As a physician deeply concerned about the health of all Americans, I am convinced that the Government encroachment into the health care choices has been very detrimental.

There are many areas where the Federal Government has been involved when they should not have and created more problems than it solved. There is no evidence that the Federal Government has improved education or medicine in spite of the massive funding and mandates of the last 40 years, yet all we hear is a call for increased spending and more mandates.

How bad will it get before we reject the big government approach is anybody's guess.

Welfarism and government interventionism are failed systems and always lead to ever more intrusive government.

The issue of privacy is paramount. Most Americans and Members of Congress recognize the need to protect everyone's privacy. But the loss of privacy is merely the symptom of an authoritarian government.

Effort can and should be made, even under today's circumstances, to impede the Government's invasion of privacy. But we must realize that our privacy and our liberty will always be threatened as long as we instruct our Government to manage a welfare state and to operate a foreign policy as if we are the world's policemen.

If the trends we have witnessed over the past 70 years are not reversed, our economic and political system will soon be transposed into a fascist system. The further along we go in that direction, the more difficult it becomes to reverse the tide without undue suffering. This cannot be done unless respect for the rule of law is restored. That means all public officials must live up to their promise to follow the written contract between the people and the Government, the U.S. Constitution.

For far too long, we have accepted the idea that government can and should take care of us. But that is not what a free society is all about. When government gives us something, it does two bad things. First, it takes it from someone else; second, it causes dependency on government. A wealthy country can do this for long periods of time, but eventually the process collapses. Freedom is always sacrificed and eventually the victims rebel. As needs grow, the producers are unable or unwilling to provide the goods the government demands. Wealth then hides or escapes, going underground or overseas, prompting even more government intrusion to stop the exodus from the system. This only compounds the problem.

Endless demands and economic corrections that come with the territory will always produce deficits. An accommodating central bank then is forced to steal wealth through the inflation tax by merely printing money and creating credit out of thin air. Even though these policies may work for awhile, eventually they will fail. As wealth is diminished, recovery becomes more

difficult in an economy operating with a fluctuating fiat currency and a marketplace overly burdened with regulation, taxes and inflation.

The time to correct these mistakes is prior to the bad times, before tempers flare. Congress needs to consider a new economic and foreign policy.

Why should any of us be concerned about the future, especially if prosperity is all around us? America has been truly blessed. We are involved in no major military conflicts. We remain one of the freest nations on Earth. Current economic conditions have allowed for low unemployment and a strong dollar, with cheap purchases from overseas further helping to keep price inflation in check. Violent crimes have been reduced; and civil disorder, such as we saw in the 1960s, is absent.

We have good reason to be concerned for our future. Prosperity can persist, even after the principles of a sound market economy have been undermined; but only for a limited period of time.

Our economic, military, and political power, second to none, has perpetuated a system of government no longer dependent on the principles that brought our Republic to greatness. Private-property rights, sound money and self-reliance have been eroded; and they have been replaced with welfarism, paper money, and collective management of property. The new system condones special-interest cronyism and rejects individualism, profits and voluntary contracts.

Concern for the future is real, because it is unreasonable to believe that the prosperity and relative tranquility can be maintained with the current system. Not being concerned means that one must be content with the status quo and that current conditions can be maintained with no negative consequences. That, I maintain, is a dream.

There is growing concern about our future by more and more Americans. They are especially concerned about the moral conditions expressed in our movies, music and television programs. Less concern is expressed regarding the political and economic system. A nation's moral foundation inevitably reflects the type of government and, in turn, affects the entire economic and political system.

In some ways I am pleasantly surprised by the concern expressed about America's future, considering the prosperity we enjoy. Many Americans sense a serious problem in general, without specifically understanding the economic and political ramifications.

Inflation, the erosion of the dollar, is always worse than the government admits. It may be that more Americans are suffering than generally admitted. Government intrusion in our lives is commonplace. Some unemployed are not even counted. Lower middle-class citizens have not enjoyed an increase in the standard of living others have. The fluctuation in the stock market may have undermined confidence.

Most Americans still believe everyone has a right to a free education, but they don't connect this concept to the evidence: That getting a good education is difficult; that drugs are rampant in public schools; that safety in public schools is a serious problem; and that the cost is amazing for a system of free education if one wants a real education.

The quality of medical care is slipping and the benefits provided by government are seen by more and more people to not really be benefits at all. This trend does not make Americans feel more confident about the future of health care. Let there be no doubt, many Americans are concerned about their future, even though many still argue that the problem is only that government has not done enough.

I have expressed concern that our policies are prone to lead to war, economic weakness, and social discord. Understanding the cause of these problems is crucial to finding a solution. If we opt for more government benevolence and meddling in our lives, along with more military adventurism, we have to expect an even greater attack on the civil liberties of all Americans, both rich and poor.

America continues to be a great country, and we remain prosperous. We

have a system of freedom and opportunities that motivate many in the world to risk their lives trying to get here.

The question remains, though, can we afford to be lax in the defense of liberty at this juncture in our history? I do not think so.

The problems are not complex, and even the big ones can be easily handled if we pursue the right course. Prosperity and peace can be continued, but not with the current system that permeates Washington. To blindly hope our freedom will remain intact without any renewed effort in its defense or to expect that the good times will automatically continue places our political system in great danger.

Basic morality, free markets, sound money, and living within the rule of law, while clinging to the fundamental precepts that made the American Republic great, are what we need. And it is worth the effort.

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