

THE FOLLY OF FOREIGN
INTERVENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 50 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, if I had a chance to pick a topic for my special order today, I would call it the folly of foreign intervention.

We have heard very much in the last few weeks about the possibility of a war being started in the Persian Gulf. It looks like this has at least been delayed a bit. There is a temporary victory brought about by Secretary General Kofi Annan of the United Nations in agreement with the government of Iraq.

This, I think, is beneficial. At least it gives both sides more time to stop and think and talk before more bombs are dropped.

Before we left about 10 days ago from the Congress, I think many Members and much of the Nation thought that within a short period of time, within a week or so, there would be additional bombing by the Americans over Baghdad.

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There were polls out at that time that said 70 percent of the American people endorsed this move, something that I questioned and of course I question the legitimacy of dealing with policy by measuring polls, anyway. I think we should do what is right, not try to decide what is right by the polls. But in this circumstance, I think the polls must have been very, very misleading.

We heard a gentleman earlier this evening from North Dakota mention when he was at home essentially nobody was telling him that they were in favor of the war. I think most Members of Congress on this past week on visiting home had the same message. Certainly there was a very loud message in Columbus at a town hall meeting. It was written off by those who wanted to go to war and wanted to drop the bombs by saying, well, no, this was just a very noisy bunch of hippies who are opposed to the war. There are a lot of people in this country who are opposed to the war and they are not hippies. I think to discredit people who oppose going and participating in an act of war and try to discredit them by saying that they belong to a hippie generation, I think they are going to lose out in the credibility argument in this regards.

This debate has been going on for quite a few months. It looks like it is not resolved. Although there has been an agreement, it is far from a victory for either side. It is somewhat ironic about how this has come about, because it seems that those of us who have been urging great caution have been satisfied with at least a temporary solution, yet we are not entirely satisfied at all with the depend-

ency on the effort by the United States enforcing U.N. resolutions. In this case I think what we must do is reassess the entire policy because it is policy that gets us into trouble.

It is in this one instance. We did not just invent foreign interventionism in foreign policy. This has been going on for a long time. The worst and the first egregious example, of course, was in Korea where we went to war under the U.N. banner and was the first war we did not win. Yet we continue with this same policy throughout the world. Hardly can we be proud of what happened in Vietnam. It seems like we are having a lot more success getting along with the Vietnamese people as we trade with them rather than fight with them.

There is a lot of argument against this whole principle of foreign interventionism, involvement in the internal affairs of other nations, picking leaders of other countries. We were warned rather clearly by our first President, George Washington, that it would be best that we not get involved in entangling alliances and that we instead should talk with people and be friendly with people and trade with people. Of course the first reaction would be, yes, but the person that we are dealing with as leader of Iraq is a monster and therefore we cannot trust him and we should not talk to him. There have been a lot of monsters in the world and we have not treated them all the same way. Just think of the tremendous number of deaths to the tune of millions under Pol Pot. At that time we were even an ally of his. Even the inconsistency of our policy where in the 1980s we actually encouraged Saddam Hussein. We sold him weapons. We actually had participated in the delivery of biological weapons to Hussein. At that time we encouraged him to cross the border into Iran. We closed our eyes when poison gases were used.

So all of a sudden it is hard to understand why our policy changes. But once we embark on a policy of intervention and it is arbitrary, we intervene when we please or when it seems to help, it seems then that we can be on either side of any issue anytime, and so often we are on both sides of many wars. This does not serve us well. A policy design that is said to be pro-American and in defense of this country where we follow the rules and follow the laws and we do not get involved in war without a declaration by the Congress, I think it would be very healthy not only for us as Americans but it would be very healthy for the world as a whole.

I am very pleased that there has been at least a pause here, although our troops will be maintained there and they are waiting to see if there is some other excuse that we can go in there and resume the bombing. But the whole notion that we are going to bring Hussein to his knees without the cost of many American lives I think is naive, because nobody has proposed

that we go in and invade the country. There have been proposals that we just assassinate Hussein, which is illegal. At least that is acknowledged that this is an illegal act, to go in and kill another leader, although we have been involved in that too. But many people have argued that this should be our policy now, and that is to topple Hussein.

But we used the CIA in Cuba a few decades ago. Now it has just been revealed that our CIA botched the job. Also, those individuals who were trying to restore freedom to Cuba, we let them down by them assuming we would do more and then we did less. We were very much involved in overthrowing a leader in South Vietnam right before the rampant escalation of the war there. That did not serve us well. And then there is another example of our CIA putting a government in charge over in Iran. That is when we put the Shah in. But this did not bring peace and stability to the region. It brought us hostage takings and hostility and hatred and threats of terrorism in this country. So although many will make the moral cause for doing good around the world, there is no moral justification if we are going to follow the laws of this land and try to stick to the rules of providing a national defense for us and a strong foreign policy.

I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN. I wanted to take just a moment to say how much I appreciate many of the points that the gentleman is making, particularly in regard to the folly of much or many of our foreign interventions in recent years.

I remember about 3 years ago reading on the front page of the Washington Post that we had our troops in Haiti picking up garbage and settling domestic disputes. Picking up garbage for Haitians and settling their domestic disputes should not be a mission of the American military. The Haitians should pick up their own garbage.

Then a few weeks ago, I heard that we had our troops in Bosnia giving rabies shots to dogs. The Bosnians should give their own rabies shots to their dogs. That should not be a mission of the American military. This business of turning our American military into international social workers is something I think the overwhelming majority of Americans are strongly opposed to.

The really sad thing is that we have spent many, many billions of hard-earned tax dollars in recent years in Haiti, Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia, now in Iraq, and I said on the floor of this House a couple of weeks ago, why the rush to war in Iraq, why the rush to war, why the eagerness to send young American men and women into harm's way. The American people were not clamoring for war then. They are even more so not clamoring for war now.

Going to war should be the most reluctant decision that we make. We should go to war only when there is no