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## The End of Interventionism?

By Daniel McAdams  
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Looking over the global landscape, the areas most touched by US interventionist foreign policy are objectively in the worst, most desperate shape. The mainstream media will report that the current disaster in Syria came about because the people decided to stand up to a cruel dictator in the “Arab Spring” that swept through the greater Middle East in 2011, and that the dictator cracked down so hard it caused the violence to spin out of control. We know, of course, that is not the whole story. The US had been involved in fomenting unrest in Syria at least five years or more before violence broke out. A WikiLeaks-released cable from 2006 shows how hard the US Embassy in Damascus was working to figure out a way to overthrow the government. Shortly after the partially manufactured protests devolved into violence, the CIA moved in and began arming (and importing) rebels to finish the deed. In five years the country has been destroyed, hundreds of thousands killed, millions left without homes.

Likewise, even most critics of the 2003 US attack on Iraq will try to salvage the philosophy of interventionism by claiming the only reason democracy hasn’t broken out is that the US military didn’t occupy the country long enough! As if being occupied by a foreign power is the route to responsible governance and the development of civil society!

There are too many other examples to mention, even little-discussed areas like Somalia and Nigeria – with the latter falling prey to a radical Islamist gang, Boko Haram, that benefited from a region awash in weapons after the US-led attack on Libya opened the weapons depots.

The US was actively involved in breaking up Sudan, which we were told was being run into the ground by “Arabs” ruling from the north who were abusing black Africans in the south. I was once invited to lunch by the Sudanese ambassador to Washington while I was working on the Hill and he asked me, “do I look like an Arab to you?” Needless to say, I doubt anyone would have guessed he was not what the US government considered a “black African.” His point was that the dispute was being created artificially by external sources. In fact the US and its allies were determined to break the country up (hint: it had a lot to do with oil) and would settle for any pretext. The result has not been the peaceful South Sudan ruled locally that was promised. Instead the new country launched with the help of “humanitarian interventionists” like US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power has proven to be orders of magnitude worse off than when it was under Khartoum’s rule.

The track record of US interventionism is so universally disastrous that slowly but steadily the rest of the world is pushing back against a US foreign policy that is making their own lives less safe. Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban, for example, gave an interview to a German newspaper recently in which he singled out US foreign policy as a force for harm rather than good in the world.

Said Orban:

*America believes in the exportation of democracy. This sounds good; however, wherever it has been tried, entire regions often became destabilized, the consequences of which are suffering, death and migration. Additionally, often anti-democratic, extremist forces rose to power as a result of the free elections.*

*Believing in the democracy export is arrogant because it fails to take the cultural structures of the given regions into consideration. But whether you like it or not, it is the culture that determines the political culture.*

That is pretty pointed criticism coming from a close NATO ally and the representative of a pro-US, center-right government. But this week the Hungarians celebrate the 60th anniversary of their 1956 revolution to extricate themselves from under the Soviet boot, so it is understandable that they have the idea of national sovereignty fresh in their minds.

In a recent episode of Ron Paul’s Liberty Report, we discussed Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte’s announcement last week that he wanted to separate his country from domination by US foreign policy. The US has been determined to use the Philippines as a weapon in its arsenal against a China newly assertive in the South China Sea, but many in the Philippines – the president included it seems – see little benefit to going on war footing against a neighbor with your ally thousands of miles away.

What can the interventionists offer when the fruits of their philosophy are laid bare? Lies and obfuscation. Manipulation of media messages. Demonization of those who oppose the neoconservatives and “humanitarian” interventionists who run Washington’s foreign policy. But as Dr. Paul has said with increasing frequency lately, their failure is our big opportunity. We

must educate ourselves on their failures and we must train ourselves to make the case for a pure noninterventionist foreign policy as the only way to keep us safe.