



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on March 18, 2011

On Libya, It's the Beltway Interventionists vs. Ron Paul and the Founders

The resolution goes even further, however, asking Obama “to develop a strategy aimed at fulfilling the president’s stated goal: the end of the Gadhafi regime,” according to Agence France-Presse. That includes, McCain said, intelligence and security assistance to the rebels.

In addition, the resolution calls for the President to recognize the Libyan opposition forces. McCain, writes AFP, “told journalists that the United States should recognize the Libyan rebel council as a legitimate government ‘like the French did.’” (The Senator, it seems, is a fair-weather Francophile, citing France favorably when it supports foreign interventions that he likes but [dismissing](#) it as “an aging movie actress ... who’s still trying to dine out on her looks, but doesn’t have the face for it” when it does not.)



Lieberman has stated his preference for arming the rebels directly. Asked if he shared that sentiment, Kerry replied that “all options have to be considered,” [the Associated Press reports](#).

The Obama administration has also favored intervention almost from the outset. As early as February 27, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was [offering](#) “any type of assistance,” including weapons, to the anti-Gadhafi forces, who wisely [turned such assistance down](#), not wishing to be beholden to Washington. Now the administration’s Ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, is “pushing the UN to authorize not just a no-fly zone over Libya, but also the use of air strikes to stop the advance of forces loyal to” Gadhafi, [according to the Guardian](#). Adds the paper:

A diplomat on the security council told the Associated Press that Rice said the goal should be expanded from creating a no-fly zone to protecting civilians. To do this, the international community must have all the necessary tools — including authorization to use planes, troops or ships to stop attacks by Gadhafi’s air, land and sea forces.

In short, the administration — with the exception of Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who has been [cautioning](#) bellicose politicians that even imposing a no-fly zone is a huge, risky undertaking — wants to go to war against Libya.

As is, unfortunately, so often the case, the (almost) lone voice of sanity in Congress with regard to this issue is Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), who wrote in his weekly “Texas Straight Talk” update: “Let us be clear about one thing: for the U.S. to establish a ‘no fly’ zone over all or part of Libya would constitute an act of war against Libya.” Furthermore, he points out, with the administration insisting that “nothing is off



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the table” in terms of intervention, it could very well be a nuclear war.

As a member of Congress who actually takes seriously his oath to “support and defend the Constitution” (another, of course, is his son, Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who has also [voiced his opposition](#) to intervention in Libya), Paul wants “to make sure we actually follow the black letter of the law provided in the Constitution that explicitly grants Congress the sole authority to declare war.” He continues:

It is alarming how casually the administration talks about initiating acts of war, as though Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution does not exist. Frankly, it is not up to the President whether or not we intervene in Libya, or set up “no-fly” zones, or send troops. At least, it is not if we follow the Constitution. Even by the loose standards of the War Powers Resolution, which cedes far too much power to the president, he would have no authority to engage in hostilities because we have not been attacked — not by Gadhafi, and not by the rebels. This is not our fight. If the administration wants to make it our fight, let them make their case before Congress and put it to a vote. I would strongly oppose such a measure, but that is the proper way to proceed.

Paul goes on to list some of the other reasons he opposes intervention in Libya. First he reiterates that “we have not been attacked.” Second, since neither the rebels nor the Gadhafi regime poses “an imminent threat to the United States ..., this is simply none of our business.” Third, “our intervention will undermine the legitimacy of whatever government prevails in Libya. Especially if it is a bad government, it will be seen as our puppet and further radicalize people in the region against us.” Finally, “We don’t have the money for more military operations overseas.... That alone should put an end to any discussion about getting involved in Libya’s civil war.”

One hopes that the Libyan conflict ends in freedom for the heretofore oppressed people of that country. America, however, “goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy,” proclaimed John Quincy Adams. “She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own.”

Americans and their leaders would do well to heed Ron and Rand Paul rather than McCain, Lieberman, Kerry, and the hawks in the Obama administration. The way of the Pauls, which is the way of the Founders, leads to peace, liberty, and prosperity. The way of all the rest leads to war, tyranny, and destitution.

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