



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on January 18, 2012

Poll: GOP Voters Split on Foreign Intervention

Analysts said the results reflected deep divisions within the Republican Party. “That makes me say that the party is fundamentally fractured, and not only along the obvious lines of the social conservatives, the libertarian conservatives and the moderate conservatives,” pollster John Zogby was quoted as saying by the *Times*.

The survey was also indicative of changing priorities among GOP voters — especially after President Obama [took up the mantle of interventionism](#) and more firmly associated the philosophy with the Democratic Party. But Republican advocates of interventionism cited in the *Times* article blasted the results, too.



Former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton even took the opportunity to attack GOP presidential candidate Rep. Ron Paul. The 12-term Texas Congressman is the only major Republican candidate calling for what he touts as a more humble foreign policy and an end to U.S. wars. Paul is also a lonely voice advocating an end to all foreign aid, which he likens to taking money from the poor in America to distribute among the rich in other nations. For Bolton and other neoconservatives, however, that makes Paul a target.

“What I think the problem is, is that people’s attention has turned away from the international sphere, and it’s a big mistake because you can’t have a strong economy without the ability to protect American interests around the world,” said Bolton, who endorsed Mitt Romney and believes the U.S. government should have a very active role overseas. The former Bush administration official also blasted Paul — whose non-interventionist views helped him surge into the top tier — as an “isolationist,” a label rejected by the constitutionally minded Congressman, who advocates peace and free trade.

The survey of 500 GOP primary voters, conducted for the newspaper by JZ Analytics, found that 48 percent of respondents believed the U.S. government should continue to intervene in the world “whenever its interests are challenged.” Slightly less — 47 percent — said America could no longer afford to spread its resources too thin and should deal with problems at home. The rest were not sure.

Respondents were asked to choose between two statements. The first one read: “America is the most powerful nation in the world not only because of its strong military but because of the values of personal freedom it represents. America must intervene in the affairs of the world whenever its interests are challenged.” The second option, on the other hand, said: “America is in a new global era and cannot afford to spread its resources too thin. It must rely on strong alliances with other nations and take care of its domestic priorities first.”

An analyst commenting on the poll results, George Mason University Professor Colin Dueck, cautioned readers about reading too much into the poll. He said the question was framed in a way that did not



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capture the full extent of Rep. Paul's aversion to entangling alliances. Plus, the nation's weariness with over a decade of war understandably leads to calls for more emphasis on domestic issues, Dueck explained.

Earlier this week Paul, a veteran, was [booed](#) during a South Carolina debate for proposing that the U.S. government adhere to a key tenet of Christianity — the “Golden Rule” — in foreign affairs. “If another country does to us what we do to others, we are not going to like it very much. I would say that we maybe ought to consider the Golden Rule in foreign policy. Don't do to other nations what we don't want them to do to us,” Paul said. The GOP candidate, who finished strong in Iowa and New Hampshire, has also called for applying the principles of a “Just War” and a constitutionally required congressional declaration of war before embarking on any more military actions around the world.

But despite the animosity toward Paul's positions among some Republicans and much of the so-called “establishment,” polls show [U.S. troops](#) and the [American people](#) are becoming increasingly opposed to the various bipartisan wars. And the trend does not appear to be changing.

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