



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on February 7, 2013

Rand Paul Calls for Containment, Common Sense in U.S. Foreign Policy

Speaking at the Heritage Foundation Wednesday morning, Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) [laid out his specific recommendations](#) for restoring the Founding Fathers' vision concerning the foreign policy of the United States.

Paul couched his ideas in the context of the current "War on Terror" and the oft-mentioned, though rarely identified, enemy in that war — radical Islam.



"Radical Islam," said Paul, "is no fleeting fad, but is a relentless force." It is, "like communism, an ideology with far reach and will require a firm, but patient, opposition," he continued.

The appropriate response to that force, Paul argued, should neither be "neo-con interventionism" nor "isolationism." Rather, we should seek a moderate, restrained, middle ground that keeps America's enemies in check without sacrificing our constitutional values.

Those values, Paul said, are best demonstrated by a "more restrained foreign policy" that is the "true conservative" position. By adopting this position, the senator argued, conservatives will be promoting the two principles of that ideology: "respect for the Constitution and fiscal discipline."

It is the failure of the United States to adhere to its own constitutional values that has led to the intervention and occupation of the Middle East that have "fanned the flames of radical Islam," Paul said.

Paul posited that military intervention in a country against the wishes of the host government is war and should require a declaration of war by Congress.

Therein lies the rub, in Paul's view.

U.S. military operations in Libya, for example, were an example of such an intervention and Congress "just sat back and let it happen," Paul said.

When it comes to deploying the military or using armed force against another nation, Paul said the Congress has become "not just a rubber stamp, but an irrelevancy."

Before sending troops and arms to Libya, President Obama "sought permission from NATO, the UN, the Arab League, and from everyone but the United States Congress," Paul recounted. "It is an insult!" he declared.

Making this point, Paul turned to a warning James Madison wrote in [a letter written to Thomas Jefferson](#) on April 2, 1798:

The constitution supposes, what the history of all governments demonstrates, that the executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It [the Constitution] has accordingly with studied care, vested the question of war in the legislature.

Congress, he believes, "has abdicated its role" in restraining the president's rush to invade and



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preemptively bomb other nations. For years now, that body has shown “no moderation of dollars or in executive power.”

Fiscal security is essential to national security, Paul believes. Quoting various members of current and former military leadership, Senator Paul warned that failing to address our current economic crisis will leave us unable to address genuine threats to our national security in the future.

Regardless of the soundness of this advice and legitimate urgency of its application, Paul laments that there is a lack of reasonable voices in Congress, particularly when it comes to fiscal restraint and foreign policy.

“Where are the calls for moderation?” Paul asks.

In his own effort to restore the economic health of our nation, on Tuesday, Senator Paul introduced the Federal Reserve Transparency Act of 2013, also known as the “Audit the Fed” bill (S. 209). This legislation calls for the elimination of restrictions on the ability of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to audit the Federal Reserve. It would also subject to congressional oversight all of the Fed’s credit facilities, securities purchases, and quantitative easing activities.

“The Fed’s operations under a cloak of secrecy have gone on too long and the American people have a right to know what the Federal Reserve is doing with our nation’s money supply,” Paul said in [a statement announcing his offering of the bill](#). “Audit the Fed has significant bipartisan support in Congress and across the country and the time to act on this is now.”

In his Heritage Foundation address, Senator Paul questioned the wisdom of sending money and lethal weapons to nations that are “hostile to Israel and the United States.”

“Will Syrian rebels respect the rights of Christians and women?” Paul asked. Without an answer to this question, there is no way the United States can justify arming the rebels.

As [our own reporting has revealed](#), not only are these “freedom fighters” unconcerned with the rights of women and the one million-plus Christians who live in Syria, but many in their leadership and ranks are known to be al-Qaeda operatives.

The senator similarly argues that no good can come of arming Egypt. With an amendment to the fiscal cliff bill passed by the senate last month, Paul tried to block the administration’s plan to send F-16 jet fighters and advanced M1A1 tanks to the government of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi.

Predictably, the Senate rejected Paul’s amendment by [a vote of 79-19](#).

Prior to the vote, [Paul took to the floor to ask why](#) the president and Congress insist on sending “our most sophisticated fighter planes” to a country whose government is believed by many to be in danger of “unraveling.”

Paul was right. The head of Egypt’s armed forces, General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, warns that the week-long widespread civil unrest that has resulted in the death of 52 people threatens to bring down the Morsi regime.

Sisi wrote [on the army’s Facebook page](#), “The continuation of the struggle of the different political forces ... over the management of state affairs could lead to the collapse of state.”

The irony of this instability is, as Paul correctly identified, the fact that similar dissatisfaction with totalitarianism and martial law inspired the Arab Spring only a year ago. Now, those same people who united to overthrow a government bent on instituting martial law, are threatened with persecution by



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leaders of the new government.

Although he opposes all of the foregoing forays into the conflicts of the Middle East, Senator Paul does not advocate a total withdrawal from the region.

“Leaving the Middle East [militarily] does not mean we stop being involved,” Paul explained. Instead, Paul pushes for containment of our enemies in the area.

As proposed by Senator Paul, containment is a rational, restrained policy that recognizes that “war should never be the only option” in dealing with an antagonistic nation and rejects the use of preemptive military strikes based on “something a country might do.”

In fact, the containment policy proposed by Paul requires that the United States maintain a “preponderance of strength” in dealing with all other governments.

If Senator Paul can maintain this devotion to the Constitution and to fiscal restraint, Wednesday’s speech may soon be regarded as the first of many speeches on his road to the White House.

On that point, at a press conference attended by *The New American* after the Heritage address, Paul admitted that he plans on playing an important role in the upcoming debate on the future of the United States.

If he can consistently and effectively communicate his ideas for a constitutionally sound domestic and foreign policy to the millions of Americans who supported his father, Ron Paul, in 2012, then Rand Paul will certainly have the opportunity to make great and significant strides toward the restoration of the Republic established by the Founders whose wisdom he obviously admires.

Photo of Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.): AP Images

Joe A. Wolverton, II, J.D. is a correspondent for The New American and travels frequently nationwide speaking on topics of nullification, the NDAA, and the surveillance state. He can be reached at jwolverton@thenewamerican.com.



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