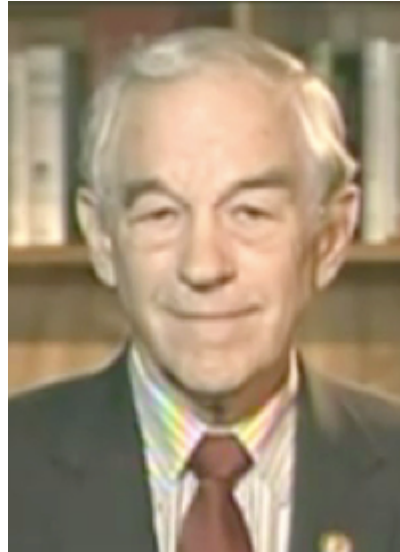




Written by [Daniel Sayani](#) on March 25, 2011

Rep. Ron Paul on Libya

Like other principled noninterventionists, Rep. Paul has declared his opposition to America's intervention in Libya. Aside from it violating the principles of the Founding Fathers, President Obama's use of American troops in Libya is also unconstitutional, since it is yet another undeclared war — that is, war that the nation entered without congressional approval — as were the Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War, invasion of Serbia, and current Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.



In addition, like the war in Serbia and Kosovo (where American troops were subjected to serving under UN and NATO forces), and in Korea and Iraq (which were entered into under UN mandates), the current intervention in Libya is being fought with American troops under the command of NATO generals, yet another example of how America's war-making power is being cast aside in favor of an international entity and America's sovereignty compromised. Of course, the enormous cost associated with such military intervention poses another threat to America's long-term viability, as the ever-increasing deficit continues to metastasize due to the continuation of the "welfare-warfare state," in which the costs of defense spending rise exponentially.

Rep. Paul articulated these themes of constitutionalism, fiscal conservatism, and national sovereignty in his declared opposition to the military intervention in Libya in one of his latest television interviews on CNN.

On Monday, Paul [appeared on](#) CNN's *In The Arena* with former New York Governor Elliott Spitzer, a Democrat. Spitzer began the interview by contrasting President Obama's position to the position he espoused as Senator, and then noting that Paul agrees with *Senator* Obama. When Obama was a U.S. Senator, he believed that the country should only enter war under the constitutional grounds that unless the country is under immediate attack, only Congress maintains the authority to declare war. Spitzer then asked Paul to "explain why you don't think what's going on in Libya, or, for that matter, the rest of North Africa is any of our business." According to Paul:

I don't think they are up front with this. It is said that we are going there for humanitarian



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reasons. But have you ever noticed around the world, there are a lot of humanitarian problems. One, in gross abuse of rights, was in Rwanda. We didn't care too much about that.

There's abuse of demonstrators all through the Middle East right now. But — it's being done by governments that we endorse. There are friendly dictators. So, I think they are being disingenuous when they say this is a mission for humanitarianism. It's probably more related to oil than anything else.

Asked if he would have supported intervention in Rwanda, Paul said:

I don't think it's part of our Constitution that we should go around the world trying to solve every problem. And I think that it's very difficult to help people who really need it. Even in Libya today, the chances of really helping the people is unknown.

But too often when you take money or even food and give it to these factions when they are fighting and at war, they become weapons of war. One faction will get it and use it against the other. And very rarely does it help the people.

So I don't think it's constitutional. I don't think it accomplishes what it's supposed to. And that the Founders were, I think, rather shrewd in giving us advice. Stay out of entangling alliances, stay out of the internal affairs of other nations.

But there's every reason to help people and we are a generous nation. When people really suffer, whether there's an earthquake or any type of tragedy, the American people are quite willing to help.

But when politicians get involved, it becomes political and it doesn't achieve it. There's always unintended consequences and things happen that weren't intended. And I just think we have gotten into wars so often since World War II carelessly.

And here we are, we are engaged in two wars now. We can't get out of either one and we are just falling into another one and the authorities coming from the United Nations. Congress is irrelevant.

Rep. Paul then discussed the question of legal authority to enter war. Spitzer pressed Rep. Paul on whether he would support any humanitarian intervention (known among United Nations advocates and other interventionists as "[Responsibility to Protect](#)," or "R2P"). Paul said, "Not militarily, no. Always only voluntarily."

Regarding where the President supposedly gets his authority to go to war without the constitutionally required declaration of war from Congress, Paul said:

The argument is that he's getting authority from the U.N. and treaties allow — that's an international law, it becomes the law of the land. But there are limitations. You cannot amend the Constitution by treaty. What if the UN decided that we shouldn't have a First Amendment? Would you say, oh, this is OK because the authority comes from the United Nations? That would be preposterous.

Spitzer also asked Rep. Paul about his thoughts on the [War Powers Act](#). (Passed in 1973, this act provides that the President can send U.S. armed forces into action abroad either by congressional authorization or if the United States is already under attack or a serious threat, and it requires the President to notify Congress within 48 hours of committing armed forces to military action and forbids armed forces from remaining for more than 60 days, with a further 30-day withdrawal period, without



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an authorization of the use of military force or a declaration of war.) Paul responded:

I also agree with all the Presidents who consider the war powers resolution is unconstitutional. I believe that. That is amending the Constitution as well. And it actually legalizes war for 90 days like was mentioned earlier on this program.

He can't — he doesn't have to sweat it with Congress because Congress legalized war for 60 days and then he has 30 days more. By that time, there's a lot of killing going on and nobody gets it — you know, nobody stops a war. So, they slip into war, Congress reneges on their responsibility, the President usurped his power and they use it when they're in the executive branch. They like this.

But, no, the war powers resolution is not constitutional. But the Presidents don't like because they're afraid their power maybe curtailed. I don't like it because it has given the president too much power and actually legalizes war for 90 days.

In addition to Ron Paul, others taking a constitutionalist position in opposition to Libyan intervention include Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.), and journalist [George Will](#).

Photo: Ron Paul on CNN

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