

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview
Article: “Opposing Imperialism Is Not Isolationism” (15–20 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Goal

This article exposes the charge of “isolationism” as a smokescreen that those who support big-government policies use against those who believe in limited, proper government actions.

Instructions

1. Instruct students to read the article and answer the review questions. (Give them 8–10 minutes.)
2. Ask for volunteers to share their answers as a class.

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. What is your general take on this article—something that stands out to you?
AWV.
2. What does the author say about those who charge Ron Paul with being an “isolationist”?
He says it’s ridiculous—that he simply wants to foster free trade with the nations of the world, instead of invading and taking over their political systems and interfering with their peoples. Also, that Paul is one of the few that thinks free trade should NOT be managed by governments, but allowed to freely happen among the people.
3. What does the author say that “establishment Republicans” and “progressives” have in common? How does he link President Barack Obama to these groups?
They favor big-government, expansive military operations around the world, the massive debt and taxation to pay for it, violations of the Bill of Rights, etc.
4. Why do you think that so many big-government-supporting politicians also are enthusiastic about using the U.S. military to interfere with nations around the world?
AWV, a few ideas: (a) They don’t care about the Constitution, or they would legally declare war as the Constitution requires Congress to do. (b) If they don’t care about following the Constitution on that point, then they certainly don’t care about following its limits and protecting the rights of the people that are supposed to be guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. (c) Those who believe that the solution to education, health care, housing, food, etc. can naturally be expected to also believe that the solution to the world’s problems also involve government interventionism.

Opposing Imperialism Is Not Isolationism

The Future of Freedom Foundation
Sheldon Richman • January 12, 2012

When pundits [“experts”] and rival politicians call Ron Paul [a Congressman then running to be the Republican candidate for President in 2012] an “isolationist,” they mislead the American people—and they know it.

They know it? How could they not? Ron Paul is for unilateral, unconditional free trade. He believes any American should be perfectly free to buy from or sell to any person in the world....He’s such a strong advocate of free trade that he objects to the world’s governments, led by the U.S. government, setting up international bureaucracies...to manage trade. He thinks trade should be a totally private matter....

So why is Paul repeatedly called an isolationist?

[I]n today’s political world, being an isolationist means opposing the U.S. government’s policing the rest of the world through invasion, occupation, and war—that is, militarism. The word “isolationist” has always suggested a fear of foreigners, and no doubt those who apply the word to Paul want to cash in on that sense. So we are left with the daffy conclusion that Ron Paul is a...head-in-the-sand isolationist precisely because he prefers peaceful trade with foreigners rather than invasion, occupation, and demolition of their countries.

If that’s what it means to be an isolationist, count me as one too.

It’s easy to understand why this inappropriate label is stuck on Paul. Establishment conservatives [politicians who claim to support limited government, but really don’t] and progressives [those who believe that government should involve itself in nearly every aspect of life] are terrified by him and desperately want him to go away. They’re terrified because he has done the worst thing imaginable: he has held up a mirror and reminded them of what they are.

He has shown establishment conservatives and even so-called Republican moderates [Republicans who support some small-government policies and some big-government policies] that they are, and long have been, apologists for empire, and therefore betrayers of the republican (small-r) ideals they say they embrace. When Paul condemns past, present, and future aggressive wars (such as the one being planned for Iran); when he calls for closing America’s 900 military installations in over 40 countries and removing America’s troops from 130 countries; when he advocates an end to all economic and military aid to foreign governments...; and when he opposes wholesale violation of the Bill of Rights...he is saying to his Republican rivals, *You have helped destroy individual liberty by shamefully supporting the U.S. global empire, which brutalizes foreign populations,...violates civil liberties, and burdens the American people with obscene debt [and] taxation....*

That charge must be hard to take from a fellow Republican. So his rivals strike back in the way they know best: They smear Paul. The thought of a staunch antiwar, pro-Bill of Rights candidate running against Barack Obama scares the daylights out of them, because they know only one way to run against a Democrat: accuse him of being an appeaser [that is, an unfair accusation that someone who doesn’t want the U.S. involved in foreign wars is “too scared to kill the bad guys”]....

This is absurd, however, because Obama is [not]. He has steadfastly carried on the empire’s program of global militarism....If you doubt it, look at his foreign-policy record....

Which brings us to the progressives. If you think establishment conservatives are scared of Ron Paul, imagine how Obama and his supporters must feel. Can you imagine their having to run against a staunch antiwar, pro-Bill of Rights opponent? This is the same Obama who has maintained Guantanamo [a U.S. military base that tortures prisoners], launched more deadly drone attacks than George W. Bush, signed into law the authority to detain individuals indefinitely without charge or trial, claimed he may kill even American citizens without due process...protected torturers from legal consequences, invoked state secrets to quash lawsuits by torture victims, and on and on.

Most progressives live in a fantasy world where they are champions of peace, tolerance, and the rule of law, when in fact they support—and refuse to criticize—a man who has mimicked George W. Bush in virtually every way [i.e., Barack Obama, a big-government President who kept America in a war-like state every single day of the eight years of his presidency].

How can they tolerate a man—Ron Paul—who reminds them of that?

This article may be found here: fff.org/explore-freedom/article/opposing-imperialism-isolationism