The Non-Freedom of Foreign Intervention

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…what has America done for the benefit of mankind? … She has, in the lapse of nearly half a century, without a single exception, respected the independence of other nations, while asserting and maintaining her own. She has abstained from interference in the concerns of others, even when the conflict has been for principles to which she clings, as to the last vital drop that visits the heart…Wherever the standard of freedom and independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all.—John Quincy Adams, July 4th, 1821

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations

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and collisions of her friendships or enmities.—George Washington 1796, Farewell Address

Introduction

John Quincy Adams expressed not just a historical thought, but a hope for the future of the United States. His hope was one that echoed the warning of George Washington to avoid foreign political entanglements where the United States may be drawn abroad for reasons that are not in the interests of the nation or citizens. Neither Quincy Adams nor Washington would be accounted as "libertarians", though in these statements they did express an affinity for the Classic Liberal approach to foreign policy. In many respects, these statements echo a version of what has come to be known as the Westphalian tradition (if such a thing exists). In either case, the warnings of Washington and the hopes of Quincy Adams have not been heeded or fulfilled in the ensuing centuries. Rather, the United States has spent much of its existence embroiled in one foreign conflict or another.

For some, the proposition of non-intervention is rooted in the Westphalian philosophy of national sovereignty (Evans and Sahnoun 2001; Macmillan 2013; Lawson and Tardelli 2013; Walt 2020). One nation intervening upon the affairs of another may erode that nation's sovereignty over its own affairs. The Westphalian idea holds that "even to this day two principles of interstate relations codified in 1648 constitute the normative core of international law: (1) the government of each country is unequivocally sovereign within its territorial jurisdiction, and (2) countries shall not interfere in each other's domestic affairs" (Brown 1992, 74; see also Osiander 2001, 261). The explicit recognition of state sovereignty would seem to imply the impropriety of engaging in intervention within the borders of another sovereign entity.

There is a wealth of evidence that the Westphalian tradition has not had nearly the effect on international relations as it is purported to have (Osiander 2001). To the extent that it once held, it seems reasonable to

argue that it no longer holds (Guha 2017; Jayasuriya 2004). In considering just the United States' history of global involvement, there is a rather dramatic shift in stance toward the international world with its involvement in the Spanish-American War of 1898. The entrance to the world stage began the seeds of what many call the U.S. empire (Hopkins 2018: 38). Since that time, the U.S. has found itself involved in numerous international affairs and conflicts, from the claiming of former Spanish colonies to involvement in two world wars to taking an active role in toppling or promoting governments around the world during the Cold War.[1]

Just since the turn of the millennium, the United States and its allies have conducted two significant wars in Iraq (2003–2011) and Afghanistan (2001–2021), as well as military operations of varying levels in intensity in Yemen (2002, 2011-present), the Philippines (2002), Côte d'Ivoire (2002), Liberia (2003), Georgia (2003, 2008), Djibouti (2003), Haiti (2004), Ethiopia (2004), Kenya (2004), Eritrea (2004), Pakistan (2004–2018), Lebanon (2006), Somalia (2007, 2011-present), Libya (2011, 2015–2019), Uganda (2011–2017), Jordan (2012), Turkey (2012), Chad (2012), Mali (2013), Syria (2014-present), and Iraq again (2014–2021). Given the nature of the Global War on Terror and the lack of standard reporting, it is possible and even likely that this list is not all inclusive. Even so, it provides an estimated 27 conflicts in a 20 year period, more than 1 conflict per year.

The libertarian perspective on foreign policy would seem to be straightforward given the proclivities for anti-big government and anti-violence. As Rothbard ([1973], 2006: 331) notes, "The idea is to shackle government from acting abroad just as we try to shackle government at home. Isolationism or peaceful coexistence is the foreign policy counterpart of severely limiting government at home."[2] This concept is in line with the earlier classical liberal thinking that suggested the way toward prosperity was through peace, and the way through peace was

[1] The United States meddled in foreign elections more than 80 times in the period between 1946 and 2000 (Levin 2016).

[2] Rothbard takes pains here to reaffirm that isolationism once meant peaceful coexistence rather than the pejorative it become during the 1930s. Rather, it was akin to non-interventionism, rather than disassociation.

commerce and prosperity (see Montesquieu [1748] 2005; Kant [1795] 1796; Mises [1919] 1983; Coyne and Bradley 2019). However, in a 2014 Pew Research poll,[3] 43% of self-described libertarians were in favor of an active U.S. foreign policy.[4] Obviously, not all libertarians agree regarding the non-intervention concept of foreign policy, with some libertarians expressing outright support for the Iraq War (Barnett 2007) using logic that may also apply to several of the other U.S. interventions that follow (Block 2007; see also Kinsella 2007).

Given the individualistic nature of libertarian philosophy, it is not completely surprising that there is not a "standard" libertarian stance on foreign policy. Rather, as Logan (2015: 11) notes,

> In a basic sense, what we want from foreign policy is the efficient production of national security. We want to make sure that Americans are safe, that our sovereignty is protected, and that we have the ability to live our lives without coercion from some external threat. Simply put, if someone has a good way of achieving these ends, everyone should support it—libertarians, liberals, conservatives, whomever. Thus, the first-order considerations about foreign policy turn on questions about how dangerous the world is and how to effectively interact with it.[5]

Instead of creating a system focused on the efficient production of national security, "Washington built up a colossal military-industrial complex, extended security commitments to scores of allies and client states, deployed a permanent globe-straddling overseas military presence, and relied on the frequent threat and use of force in pursuit of a wide range of perceived national interests, not merely to protect America's physical security" (Glaser 2020). This growth in interference on the national stage was expressly what George Washington and John Quincy Adams wished to avoid.

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[3] https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/08/25/in-search-of-libertarians/

[4] It is worth noting that in the same poll, 82% of libertarians were not willing to give up their privacy for perceived safety.

[5] Note the use of "sovereignty" as a motivation here. While it is difficult to parse the exact use of this word in this context, this concept will be explored again in the following section.

Rather than attempt to define a single, existing libertarian platform on foreign policy, this chapter hopes to draw on existing evidence to illustrate that a policy of non-intervention is consistent with libertarian leanings. This case is built on the following foundations: (1) an interventionist foreign policy removes autonomy from the foreign individuals who are intervened-upon, and (2) an interventionist foreign policy is not costless for the home country, monetarily, politically, or ideologically.

In order to build this case, the remainder of the chapter will be organized as follows. Section "Problems for the Foreign Population" will discuss the effects of intervention on the foreign nation. Section "Problems for the Home Population" will discuss the effects of foreign intervention on the domestic nation. Section "Concluding Thoughts" will conclude.

Problems for the Foreign Population

Though there is a substantial body of literature in international relations and foreign policy that relies upon the explicit or implicit sanctity of national sovereignty, this type of reasoning is not required. In fact, there is an inherent tension for libertarians to utilize the deification of a state system as the justification for non-intervention. Inoguchi and Bacon (2001: 286–288) note the "paradox of sovereignty," acknowledging that state sovereignty is a domestic political concern rather than one that requires international acknowledgment as in the Westphalian system. It is not the international community of states that gives legitimacy to a foreign government. Rather, it is the internal politics of nationalism, self-determination, and the concept of the legitimate monopoly on the use of force within domestic matters. That legitimization process cannot be done by an external agent, but only by the citizens within the community for the state to be a "proper" state (Inoguchi and Bacon 2001: 291–292; see also Jackson 2000).

Using a more liberal framework, the national authority's ability to conduct its own affairs is less sacrosanct than is the idea of individual citizen's sovereignty over the political unit. In Locke's *Second Treatise* ([1690] 2003: Chapter IV, Sec. 22), he offers that the "liberty of man,

in society, is to be under no other legislative power, but that established, by consent, in the commonwealth; nor under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact, according to the trust put in it." The consent of the individuals living within society is necessary for the social contract, not the consent of the outsider who lives beyond the system (Buchanan and Tullock [1962] 2004).

> The elevation of the individual over the state may seem to be a double-edged sword, as Giving primacy to individuals not only undermines the legal claim of the state to sovereignty, but also provides strong foundations for challenging the right to nonintervention in domestic affairs, which is a cornerstone of the Westphalian international political order. If universal notions of human rights can be used to legitimate interventions, then the whole system of sovereignty as the basis of international political order is in question (Buzan and Waever 1998; see also Spruyt 2000).

In an international order where state powers are seen as sacrosanct, the justification for intervention theoretically relies upon the stability or instability of the international order itself. This concept, termed "Westphalian peacekeeping," became "a mechanism for great power management…When the threat of disorder was sufficiently dire to bring consensus to the United Nations Security Council, multilateral military forces would be inserted between warring factions to monitor ceasefires" (Dodge 2013: 1193).

While it has been established above that "respect" for state borders has not guaranteed an absence of international conflict,[6] the move towards concern for the individual is a different way of viewing interests abroad. Once individuals become the "sovereign" unit rather than the political authority of the state, humanitarian concerns may override the concerns regarding violating state borders. Rawls (1993: 61) explicitly marks this

[6] Rothbard ([1973] 2006: 339) notes as early as the 1970s that the United States was using the respect for sovereignty paradoxically as justification for intervention, stating: "In the name of "national self-determination" and "collective security" against aggression, the American government has consistently pursued a goal and a policy of world domination and of the forcible suppression of any rebellion against the status quo anywhere in the world. In the name of combatting "aggression" everywhere—of being the world's "policeman"—it has itself become a great and continuing aggressor."

shift, arguing "the only legitimate grounds of the right to war against outlaw regimes is the defense of the society of well-ordered peoples and, in grave cases, of innocent persons subject to those regimes and the protection of their human rights." The protection of the individuals and their human rights becomes the justification for intervening internationally. Rather than an intervention to maintain the status quo of a nation, the individualistic approach lends itself to intervention for the sake of making changes abroad. While the concept of intervening in order to protect and promote humanitarian issues rather than to protect the state may sound more acceptable from a liberal or libertarian perspective, it should still give pause to those who value the rights of others. Ultimately, foreign intervention relies upon the discretionary power of a foreign government to address a perceived problem within a domestic society. In practice, these interventions often do not achieve the stated goals of human and societal betterment (Payne 2007; Coyne 2008, 2009, 2013).

The "Others" Are Not "Us"

The propensity for skepticism regarding foreign intervention is "consistent with classical liberal and libertarian ideas about the state's propensity to fail. It is difficult enough for a government to manage its own economy or deliver happiness to its own citizens. It is harder still for it to manage someone else's economy or please someone else's people" (Preble 2015: 174). An intervention from the outside has the potential, and probability, of eroding the individual's control or influence over his or her own future. In other words, the foreign intervention removes the autonomy of the individual within the intervened-upon society (Duncan and Coyne 2015). Ultimately, there are two levels of foreign intervention: (1) an intervention at the "meta-level" that will seek to change the entirety of the political, economic, and legal structure of the society, or (2) a "rules-constrained" intervention that seeks to change behavior within an existing societal structure (Duncan and Coyne 2015: 680). In either case, the intervention that is undertaken is "intended to create a state of the world that is preferable *from the standpoint of those intervening*. The intended new world is designed by the

intervener and implemented in the foreign nation through a variety of methods" (Duncan and Coyne 2015: 681, emphasis in original).

An attempt to restructure the entirety of the social stratosphere within a foreign nation is fraught with foreseen and unforeseen challenges. If the intention of the intervener is to construct a well-functioning institutional arrangement, the intervener must have an understanding of the layers of institutions or "rules of the game" within the current society (North 1990; North 2005; Boettke et al., 2008; Easterly 2013; Duncan and Coyne 2015). The underlying norms and beliefs of the people form the basis of the informal rules. Informal rules "are often context-specific and evolve to coordinate behavior only within that context. They are the result of a historical evolution that may not even be understood by those who still abide by them. In this way, they can be seen as cultural in nature. The formal rules are those that are written, either codified from existing behaviors or designed for new circumstances" (Duncan and Coyne 2015: 683–684). To create a betterment in the intervened-upon society, the intervening force must be able to avoid the typical outcome, where "[c]onstructed, large-scale attempts at social change which are not rooted in the de facto norms of existence of the current order are destined to disrupt social order and retard—rather than promote—social betterment" (Boettke 2001: 257). This outcome is extremely unlikely as the interveners will "have to find a way to understand the ideas, beliefs, habits that are indigenous to an area, and then see how the political, legal, and economic institutions that are correlated with economic development fit into the social ecology" (Boettke 2001: 259).

The informal rules are emergent orders within society, but they do emerge within the context of an existing array of spontaneous and designed orders (North 2005; Boettke et al., 2008; Williamson 2009; Wagner 2010). The implantation of a new, external system of formal institutions from the intervener may conflict with those emergent institutions that already exist. If there is friction between the informal or cultural rules and those implemented from the top-down, the formal rules will be unlikely to "stick" (Boettke et al., 2008; Coyne and Pellillo 2012). The newly implemented formal rules may also interfere with or change the context in which the original cultural rules emerged, leading

"to a disjointing between the underlying informal rules and the new context" (Duncan and Coyne 2015: 685).

Even in the less complex, "rules-constrained" intervention, the knowledge problem exists. Humanitarian interventions have the stated end goal to "alleviate potential or existing human suffering and to improve the human condition" (Coyne 2013, 18). Though these interventions may not attempt to reconfigure the entire society, state-led humanitarian "mentality holds that human suffering can be removed or prevented, that human welfare can be improved as desired, provided that the right people are in charge with the right level of resources and the right amount of will power…, that improving the human condition is a purely technological problem" (Coyne 2013, 16). Yet resource allocation is also in part an outcome of spontaneous ordering. Resource valuation is achieved through the market process (Mises [1920] 1990, [1922] 1981, [1949] 2007; Hayek 1945; Kirzner 1973). Rather than using the market to achieve efficiency in allocation, the intervener attempts to allocate resources through a top-down, administrative process (Kapur and Whittle 2010; Duncan 2019).

The administrative allocation or budgetary process creates separation between outcomes and "the private sacrifices required for its operation. Assessing the personal distributions of benefits and costs associated with the various programs is impractical, and likely to remain so" (Brubaker 1997: 355). It is the taxpayer in the intervening nation that provides the funding and the incentives by which the intervening force operates. In any administrative, top-down system, there is a disconnect between those paying the tax and those receiving the benefits (Buchanan 1949; Wagner 2012; Coyne and Duncan 2019). This disconnect will only be exacerbated when moving across national and cultural boundaries (Coyne and Mathers 2010; Duncan and Coyne 2015; Duncan 2019).

The failure of both levels of intervention stems from a similar source: the removal of agency from the intervened-upon individuals. In both cases, the intervening force attempts to make decisions on behalf of the intervened-upon society. The "humanitarian" enterprise is humanitarian from the foreign, but not necessarily the domestic, perspective. Whenever these perspectives of a "better" society may conflict, the intervening force may press forward with "a more costly intervention and

the instituting of greater coercion, which will undermine the very liberal democracy that the intervention intended to create" (Duncan and Coyne 2015: 684).

Violence is Used to Create a "Better World"

Any concern that one has regarding top-down administrative processes "should be magnified several times over when the government project hinges on coercive violence" (Preble 2015: 174). Hayek's ([1944, 2001) *The Road to Serfdom* warned that the top-down administration of socialism would lend itself to increasing totalitarianism. In what Lavoie described as the "totalitarian problem" of planning, there is a tendency for central planners to become increasingly authoritarian, as "national economic planning involves *by its very nature* the concentration of immense political and economic power in a single agency. This agency would have to be capable of mobilizing the vast resources of a nation. Such concentration will naturally lend itself to abuse by those hungry for such power and eminently competent in its exercise" (Lavoie 1985: 20–21). Advocates of socialist central planning ostensibly desire the creation of a better world through the rationalization of competing individualistic goals into one coherent societal goal. However, the inability of the individuals in society to agree to such a comment goal "will evoke stronger and stronger demands that the government or some single individual should be given powers to act on their own responsibility… The cry for an economic dictator is a characteristic stage in the movement towards planning…" (Hayek [1944] 2001: 70–71). When those at the top have envisioned their better world, the individuals within present society must move towards making the vision a reality. Failure to do so will impede the plan, leading planners and collectivists to rely upon the single individual, or dictator, to enforce the will of the collective over the dissenters through rigidification, conscription of life and labor, and general militarization of common life (Lavoie 1985: 222; see also Lippmann 1937).

Much like the fears of authoritarianism arising from domestic national planning, central planning abroad will also tend towards

increasing authoritarianism. There is little difference conceptually between domestic planning and foreign planning. As Coyne and Mathers (2010: 227) note,

> Mirroring socialism, many foreign interventions place collective goals over individual goals. Under socialism, individual freedoms and initiative were sacrificed for the good of the collective. Many foreign interventions, although often couched in the rhetoric of freedom, liberation, and self-determination, sacrifice individual autonomy for the achievement of global goals. Instead of allowing individuals to engage in self-determination and the process of individual experimentation and learning, foreign interventions rely on the plans of outside experts to maximize the global good.

Considering the often-violent tendencies of domestic socialism meant to enforce the "collective" outcomes, moving abroad is likely to exacerbate rather than improve upon the proclivities of the intervener towards excessive violence (Easterly 2013: 29–32, 89–92; Coyne and Hall 2018: 30–36).

Recall from above the potential for foreign-influenced formal institutions to conflict with the on-the-ground informal institutions. If the intervening nation has goals that conflict with the goals of those within the intervened-upon nation, frictions will become apparent. When the imposed rules align with the underlying system of norms and beliefs, the individuals within the society will comply voluntarily; however, "the more incompatible the formal rules are with the underlying norms, the more external coercive pressure must be exerted. This increased pressure necessarily leads to greater enforcement costs" (Duncan and Coyne 2015: 684). In the area of foreign intervention, "[w]hen there is a misalignment between institutions, reconstruction projects, etc. and the underlying métis, ensuring that state-building reforms will "stick" will require high enforcement costs. For instance, if informal norms guiding the behavior of citizens or the incentives of local militia members or warlords are at odds with formal institutions, actually getting the formal institutions to operate the way they were intended will require continual enforcement and force" (Coyne and Pellillo 2012: 39).

The violence used to shape the underlying society is seen as a means justified by the end. Helman and Ratner (1993) argues for a concerted effort, irrespective of sovereignty issues, to correct the direction of failed states. They argued for the United Nations to take the role of guardianship or conservatorship, similar to the "common response to broken families, serious mental or physical illness, or economic destitution" (Helman and Ratner 1993: 12), citing Cambodian intervention in the 1970–1980s as a guide and possible experiment. O'Hanlon (2000) argues that the U.S. was uniquely militarily suited to intervening, and while arguing for caution in where to intervene, posited the use of force to either suppress rebellions in areas like Angola or to divide conflicting factions into separate nations or national regions in areas like the Sudan. Which path to take would depend upon the calculation of the forces, or enforcement costs, necessary to complete the objective. Fearon and Laitin (2004) argue for a policy of "neotrusteeship" in current weak or rogue states, proposing such an arrangement in Afghanistan and Iraq during the U.S. occupations in those countries. Each of these arguments relies on the use of force to achieve the goal, and the goal is expressly that of control over the local population.

The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, with an occupation lasting until 2012, provided a long-run view of potential guardianship. The U.S. attempted to reshape the formal and underlying institutions of an entire nation, ousting the Taliban and installing a new, democratically-led government. The enterprise was not a success, with the government collapsing quickly after the U.S. withdrew its remaining troops, with the Taliban retaking control in a matter of weeks (Maizland 2022). The ultimate failure of the intervention was not unpredicted (Coyne 2008; 2013; Logan and Preble 2011; Duncan and Coyne 2015). During the occupation and reconstruction, the U.S. military found themselves faced with a viable insurgency. The 2006 *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps called for "a strategy of competitive state building combining targeted, selective violence and population control, on the one hand, with the dissemination of a credible mass ideology, the creation of modern state structures, the imposition of the rule of law, and the spurring of economic development, on the other" (Kalyvas 2008: 351; see also Logan and Preble 2011: 389). One hand brings peace

and freedom, while the other brings violence and control to ensure the "proper" path of freedom.

It does not take an attempt to overwrite the institutional setting to link foreign intervention to conflict. With the perceived rise of "dirty wars," or violent internal conflicts, as a humanitarian focus in the 1990s,[7] it became increasingly difficult for even the humanitarian organizations to remain free from violent entanglements (Sørensen 2006). Initially, an argument can be made for the necessity of such entanglements. Convoys of aid become targets for warlords, who could use the supplies to further their campaigns. More enterprising leaders found it convenient to establish "innovative local taxing systems" in areas where humanitarian organizations established a longer term presence (Sørensen 2006: 10), creating an environment where humanitarian aid results in a direct attack upon the recipient or is repurposed to facilitate an attack upon other persons in the geopolitical region. Yet though these entanglements may have some rationale in protection, the association between humanitarianism and militarism is not costless.

The humanitarian inflow can often do more harm than good (Coyne 2013; Duncan 2014; 2019). During the 1992–1995 Bosnia-Herzegovina humanitarian campaign, the UN and US response was to provide aid, convoy protection, and safe areas for accessing the aid. The combined actions, providing resources during Bosnia-Herzegovina's separation from Yugoslavia "brought the country into existence…then left the vulnerable civilian populations to their fate as violent conflict began to rage. The imposition of an arms embargo reinforced an already asymmetrical division of power between the warring parties and rendered the civilians on the Bosnian Muslim-Croat side vulnerable to violence and forced expulsions by Bosnian Serb forces" (Bywater 2021: 3).

The massive influx of humanitarian organizations into Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo in the early 1990s also helped to perpetuate rather than alleviate violence. The aid flows unwittingly helped to rearm and further militarize the Hutu refugee camps (Chandler 2001: 696–697; Cooley and Ron 2002: 28; Terry 2002: 172–173, 182, 186–187;

[7] Sadowski (1998) provides evidence refuting an actual rise in internal conflict following the end of the Cold War, however the perception of the increase remained within humanitarian circles. Pinker (2011) also uses empirical analysis to refute the increase in violence.

Duncan 2014). As the foreign humanitarian agencies took over distribution of many essential services, the regional fighting became, at least in part, subsidized by the agencies (Chandler 2001; Terry 2002). The changing nature of these services, "as well as the bribes paid to local leaders in order to facilitate the humanitarians' work with the refugees, has created a situation in which the local warlords can gain popular support from the people by claiming they are working with the humanitarian agencies and gain monetary support from the agencies themselves" (Duncan 2014; see also Buscher and Vlassenroot 2010: S265, S269; Terry 2002: 173, 186–187; Schweizer 2004: 549–550).

The increasing ties between humanitarian and military efforts has not been limited to just the local warlords. Throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century,[8] there has been an increasingly governmental, and militarized, slant to humanitarianism generally (The Economist 2000; Coyne 2013: 37; Duncan 2019) as official aid channels began "favoring political ends rather than development concerns" Kharas (2007: 4). Humanitarian aid channels often come with distinct strategic goals, even when operating through private, non-government organizations (Smith 1990; Najam 2000; Coyne 2008; Duncan 2019). The trend of entangling military strategy and humanitarian or NGO activities has continued.

While militarization of humanitarian aid does cause tension between the aid community and the military, such activity is viewed as a strategic tool by the military (Coyne 2013: 139). Humanitarian organizations may not operate as active combatants, but "they do help to ease the burden of relief projects so the military can focus on combat activities" (Duncan 2019: 236). These humanitarian projects also increase the legitimization of military exercises in foreign arenas (Hechter and Vidal-Aparicio 2011). While the NGOs that operated in Afghanistan, for example, would "place primary emphasis on gaining community buy-in and investing in quality projects," these efforts overlapped with the military's attempt to win the hearts and minds of the local populations

[8] This is not to say that there was not some prior militarization. Smith (1990: 51) notes that during the Korean War, "all voluntary cash contributions were channeled through the Department of State" before being distributed to private organizations who "proved to be useful instruments in the accomplishment of U.S. government goals abroad."

(Coyne 2013: 139). This intricate link between military interventions and humanitarian interventions have had a deleterious effect on the humanitarian side, as those in need of humanitarian aid become less willing to accept such aid from the seeming enemy. The relationship erodes the impartiality of the humanitarian organizations as they become viewed as simply an arm of the military, who may be actively conducting violence on the population (Lindsay and Lischer 2003).

Problems for the Home Population

The argument that foreign intervention is likely to produce bad outcomes abroad may not be compelling to everyone. The counterargument may run, as it did for Barnett (2007) and Logan (2015), that so long as the goal of domestic security is achieved then the damage to foreign populations is a regrettable but necessary cost. Though proponents of foreign interventions may believe that the cost of security is falling on the foreign population, there are still significant costs that accrue to home country as well. Classical liberals and libertarians are not unfamiliar with the home costs of war. Their general opposition to war has centered on maintaining peace in order to maintain good governance and economic progress. Adam Smith, as well as other "classical liberals, from Richard Cobden and John Stuart Mill to Ludwig von Mises and F. A. Hayek, excoriated war as inconsistent with prosperity and social progress, and all saw its potential for growing the state at the expense of the individual" (Preble 2015: 169). Mises in *Liberalism* (1985: 24) argues that "[t]he liberal abhors war, not, like the humanitarian, in spite of the fact that it has beneficial consequences, but because it has only harmful ones…He is convinced that victorious war is an evil even for the victor, that peace is always better than war." The underlying concern is that it is not only the foreign nation that undergoes changes. The home country will also begin to see itself shaped by the interventions it undertakes abroad.

Foreign Policy Erodes Federalism at Home

Federalism, whereby political authority is divided between levels of government, is a foundational principle of the U.S. Constitution. This division of power is expressly noted as a necessity in Madison's (1788) *Federalist Papers No. 48*. That it is a foundational principle is less important than *why* it is viewed as such. In his arguments, Madison provides a "passage of some length" from Jefferson's work in crafting a similar federalism within Virginia, noting

> All the powers of government, legislative, executive, and judiciary, result to the legislative body. The concentrating these in the same hands, is precisely the definition of despotic government. It will be no alleviation, that these powers will be exercised by a plurality of hands, and not by a single one. One hundred and seventy-three despots would surely be as oppressive as one (Thomas Jefferson, quoted in Madison 1788).

The concept of divided government is one that has been supported by classical liberals and libertarians, though only insofar as the separation provides checks on despotism (Levy 2007). As Buchanan (1995: 259) argues, "a coherent classical liberal must be generally supportive of federal political structures, because any division of authority must, necessarily, tend to limit the potential range of political coercion." The smaller, more divided the political unit, the more likely it is that a single individual's voice will be relevant to the decision making of the unit (Buchanan 1995: 262).

For a population to remain self-governing, the individual voice in the political process is of vital importance. This argument was made in Section "Problems for the Foreign Population" when discussing how foreign interventions erode the foreign individual citizen's sovereignty in their own governance. When those foreign interventions erode the domestic federalism through centralization of authority, it also erodes the domestic citizen's sovereignty, removing his or her voice. This concern that federalism may be eroded is also the concern that as it does so, government becomes more "them" and less "us". Centralization replaces the desires of the individual with the desires of the despot. The

suppression of the individual voice was noted even in the U.S.'s earliest adventures in foreign intervention. In response to the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the subsequent annexation of the Philippines, William G. Sumner (1899: 170) noted that the "war with Spain was precipitated upon us headlong, without reflection or deliberation, and without any due formulation of public opinion. Whenever a voice was raised in behalf of deliberation and the recognized maxims of statesmanship, it was howled down in a storm of vituperation and cant."[9]

The link between military adventurism, crises, and the growth of the central government have been well documented (Higgs 1987, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2012). Higgs (1987) describes the "ratchet effect" where state power expands during wars and other crises, usually at the expense of individual liberty. After the crisis subsides, the size and scope of government activity rarely returns to the pre-crisis level. Mayhew (2005) documents long-lasting policy changes stemming from several U.S. wars. Of particular note on centralization, World War I financing was the underlying reason for the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 that produced the system for national budgeting (Mayhew 2005: 478). In response to the financing needs, the U.S. government "doubled the individual and corporate income tax rates, levied an 8 percent excess profits tax, and lowered individual exemption levels…increased corporate tax rates to 12 percent in 1918 and to 10 percent in the years following," moves that led the numbers of citizens filing federal tax returns to rise "by a factor of twenty between the mid-1910s and the early 1920s, just as the percentages of American filing returns grew from under 1 percent to about 16 percent of Americans by the end of World War I and throughout the first half of the 1920s" (Sparrow 2008: 362).

[9] In his article, Sumner also very acutely notes the government's shifting stance towards a standing army and its long-run effects on militarization, writing (1899: 178): "The doctrine that we are to take away from other nations any possessions of theirs which we think that we could manage better than they are managing them, or that we are to take in hand any countries which we do not think capable of self-government, is one which will lead us very far. With that doctrine in the background, our politicians will have no trouble to find a war ready for us the next time that they come around to the point where they think that it is time for us to have another. We are told that we must have a big army hereafter. What for; unless we propose to do again bye-and-bye what we have just done?"

During the World War I "war atmosphere" of "fear of radicals, pressure for Americanization, and a discrediting of powerful anti-restrictionist nationality groups-notably the German-American Alliance," the U.S. government was able to press for immigration restrictions to build off the 1917, implementing national-origins quotas in 1921 and 1924 (Mayhew 2005: 478). The U.S. also formally implemented the Espionage Act of 1917 shortly after entering the war (Coyne and Hall 2018: 49), with the Federal Bureau of Investigations creating "a 1918, the Federal Bureau of Investigation created a General Intelligence Division that functioned during the Red Scare of 1919–20. J. Edgar Hoover started the compiling of files on individuals in 1919, a practice that he continued into the Nixon administration" (Mayhew 2005: 478).

One of the more obvious periods of government expansion through involvement in war comes during World War II. The Second World War, coming on the heels of the Great Depression, saw significant expansions in federal government size and scope (Higgs 1987; Duncan and Coyne 2013a, 2013b). During this period, the U.S. saw the emergence of what would become the "permanent war economy" (Oakes 1944; Vance 1951a, 1951b, 1951c, 1951d, 1951e, 1951f; Baran and Sweezy 1966; Melman 1970, 1971, 1985; Vatter 1985; Duncan and Coyne 2013a). With the avalanche of federal funding for the war effort, special interests—the military, organized labor, and war-related private industry—formed a coalition that would ultimately reshape a significant portion of the U.S. economy (Duncan and Coyne 2013a). The combined efforts of the military-industrial complex created a political bloc and overall institutional structure that kept defense spending flowing, even in times of peace, through the twentieth century and well into the 21st (Duncan and Coyne 2013b; Coyne and Duncan 2019). The subsequent military adventures in Korea, Vietnam, throughout the Cold War, and into the Global War on Terror have continued and exacerbated this trend.

It is not just the tendency for centralizing and growing federal budgets, or may be called scale, accompanying military adventures abroad. There is also a shift in what roles the central government plays, or scope (Higgs 1987, 2008; Coyne 2015). Increases in scale, by their nature, have distortionary effects on economic activity (Duncan and Coyne 2013b), but

"Expansions in scope can occur in a variety of ways including: direct controls over price and quantity, forced reallocations of labor toward certain industries, the formation of new agencies and boards to regulate economic activity, and the socialization of investment by the government to achieve certain, predetermined ends" (Coyne 2015: 386).

Coyne (2015: 387–388) goes further to provide a detailed table including various roles the government takes on in throughout the two World Wars, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, including but not limited to: A) (in WWI) press censorship with the creation of a federal censorship board, censorship through the seizure of telegraphs, curtailing free speech through banning public meetings, 2000 arrests under the Sedition Act; B) (in WWII and the Korean War) human rights violations in the internment of 120,000 Japanese-Americans, censorship of battlefield reporting, the suspension of *Habeas Corpus* in Hawaii after Pearl Harbor and the use of military tribunals for prosecution of civilians there, trials before the House Un-American Activities Committee; C) (in the Vietnam War) government complicity in attacks on minorities, infiltration and jailing of anti-war press, conspiracy trials of anti-war leaders, CIA mail-opening programs, and 500,000 secret FBI investigations.

Many of these expansions in scope, stemming from U.S. involvement in foreign interventions, should be of concern for classical liberals and libertarians. The press for increasing central authority engenders a scenario in which the federal government may begin to view its own citizens as threats, treating the domestic population as "other," and further isolating itself from the voice of the people it purports to serve. This distancing effect may have several unintended consequences.

What Happens Abroad Doesn't Stay Abroad

Coyne and Hall (2018: 2) describe what they term the "boomerang effect," where preparation for and engagement in foreign interventions "provide a testing ground for intervening governments to experiment with new forms of social control over distant populations…[forms which] are then imported back to the intervening country…" It has already been noted that foreign adventurism may lead to violent

outcomes for the domestic population at the hands of the federal government (i.e., the Japanese-American internment, imprisonment of anti-war protestors). The boomerang effect provides a view of the more long-run effects on the population.[10] As discussed in section "Problems for the Foreign Population", foreign interventions utilize violence to achieve the goals of the intervening nation. To succeed abroad, the intervening force must have "a willingness to use various techniques—monitoring, curfews, segregation, bribery, censorship, suppression, imprisonment, torture, violence, and so on—to control those who resist foreign governments or their goals" (Coyne and Hall 2018: 30; see also Bradley, Coyne, and Hall 2023). Those who employ such tactics for a perceived just cause will be less likely to hesitate in using them for the next perceived just cause, even if that cause takes place on domestic, rather than foreign, soil. To provide a few, but non-exhaustive list of examples of the boomerang effect throughout U.S. military history:

1. The surveillance systems employed and modified during the occupation of the Philippines under Ralph Van Deman lays the foundation for the creation of the Military Intelligence Section, an agency that would continuously expand its scope of surveillance on U.S. citizens through various iterations until finalizing itself as the National Security Agency (Coyne and Hall 2018: 74–83). In the twenty-first century, the NSA has rapidly expanded its surveillance of the domestic population, using the Global War on Terror as a means and pretext for massive increases in the collection of citizens' data regarding phone calls, emails, and other aspects of digital life (Greenwald 2013; Kehl 2014; Fourcade and Gordon 2020).
2. Daryl Gates (WWII) and John Nelson (Vietnam) were integral to formation of the first SWAT team. Nelson was able to apply his Force Recon training during Vietnam to the LA riots the 1960s, utilizing military tactics to control the crowds. Nelson found Gates, an LAPD administrator with prior military training, to be a sympathetic ear to the continued militarization of the police force. Together they devised

[10] This is not to imply that imprisonment of U.S. citizens does not produce long-run effects on the imprisoned or on the institutional setting of the American system. The erosion of protections for citizens does create significant downstream effects.

to have police officers trained as soldiers, creating the first Special Weapons and Tactics units (Coyne and Hall 2018: 105–107).

3. Many of the veterans of the Philippines occupation later found employment in police forces around the nation. The "enhanced interrogation" tactics learned during their time abroad was put to use in various cities. Coyne and Hall (2018: 146–147) note that by 1931 many of these tactics, "including stress positions, battery, psychological torture, and the water cure" were so commonplace as to be popularly termed the "third degree" and found to be used "in New York, Buffalo, Boston, Newark, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Dallas, El Paso, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle."
4. Much of the equipment designed and produced for the Global War on Terror has found its way back into local police forces trough the government's Program 1033 that provides domestic law enforcement with access to military surplus (Coyne and Hall 2018: 112–114). Military equipment now used domestically now includes items such as drones (Guariglia 2022), mine-resistant ambush protected, or MRAP, vehicles (Welna 2014; Mihalek 2022), tanks (Bohm and Andersson 2013), and tens of thousands of other types of military surplus (ACLU 2014: 13).

For brevity's sake, only a few items were included here. However, the significant increase in the size and scope of the American surveillance state and the continued militarization of domestic policing should give pause to any liberty minded individual. These are costs that accompany foreign interventions abroad. Should a classical liberal or libertarian want to avoid these intrusions on freedoms at home, the starting point may be to increase his or her hesitation to intervene abroad.

Concluding Thoughts

If foreign interventions lead to the erosion of liberty both abroad and at home, such interventions should be taken under only the most necessary circumstances and with the utmost humility. The damage to liberty

may be much greater and much longer-lasting than the current situation merits. Reactionary foreign policy formulated during a crisis is likely to yield negative outcomes for freedom. The more liberal approach would be to seek any and all options prior to engaging in military interventions abroad.

Preble (2015: 178) argues that "it is irresponsible to [initiate wars] except in those rare instances when all other options have been exhausted" and the first-best actions are those that "seek to expand the domain of liberty by peaceful means." Boaz (2015: 327–328) argues that libertarian solution to foreign interventions is to avoid them, only participating in wars that are directly necessary for American citizens' security. He argues for the reorienting of "foreign policy to one of self-defense and restraint, not global commitments to collective security agreements" (2015: 327) as "it is better to keep military conflicts limited and regional rather than to escalate them through superpower involvement" (2015: 328). These positions, particularly Boaz's, reflect the positions of George Washington and John Quincy Adams.

Mueller (2021) provides an argument for "a form of security isolationism" (211), where the U.S. withdraws from security arrangements but focuses on highlighting the benefits of peace, good institutions, and democracy (213–214, 218). Christensen (2021) offers an alternative, where the U.S. takes an active, but non-militaristic approach by leaning into an interstate federalist tradition. Under such a tradition, the United States would peacefully absorb foreign nations that willingly joined the union as additional states. Rather than rely on foreign interventions to impose American desires on a foreign population, the foreign population is allowed to choose to adopt the institutional arrangements of the U.S. system (Christensen 2021: 14). Such a solution would, in theory, be similar to the initial conception of the European Union (Duedney 1995: 227–228).

McDonald (2004) and Boemher and Nordstrom (2008) provide evidence that strengthening free trade relationships may aid in reducing international conflicts (see also Coyne and Pellilo 2012). Van de Haar (2020: 284) offers some debate regarding the strength of trade as a peace-reinforcing mechanism, arguing "The relationship between trade and

economic interdependence is also far more complex. Economic interdependence matters sometimes, but it cannot trump power politics." Lee and Pyun (2016: 329) find results showing that "an increase in bilateral trade interdependence and global trade integration significantly promotes peace between countries." Duncan and Farhat (2019) illustrate how trade relationships lower discriminatory behaviors, strengthening relationships across ethnic divisions. The idea that trading freely ties nations together has long been within the strand of liberal thought.[11] In his *Economic Sophisms*, Bastiat (1996: 117)[12] argued "Barriers result in isolation; isolation gives rise to hatred; hatred, to war; war, to invasion." Duncan and Coyne (2015: 694) similarly argued that "efforts aimed at improving the world may find more success if they are oriented toward unleashing the cooperative and productive nature of humankind." Perhaps the strongest advice is that of Leonard Read (1958), writing as his Pencil: "Leave all creative energies uninhibited. Merely organize society to act in harmony with this lesson…Permit these creative know-hows freely to flow. Have faith that free men and women will respond to the Invisible Hand."

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[11] Van de Haar (2020: 284) suggests that the "most obvious rebuttal of these arguments [for trade leading to peace] is empirical. It just did not happen." However, there is evidence in both directions. As it relates to the current chapter, the most relevant return comment would be that the evidence for trade is mixed. The evidence on the failure of foreign intervention leading to peace is much stronger.

[12] Though a version of the quote is often incorrectly attributed to Bastiat, Otto T. Mallery (1941: 125), in his *Economic. Union and Enduring Peace*, opined that "If soldiers are not to cross international borders, goods must do so."

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