

HST 203: History of the United States Sp17 (Escobar Meta 41054 41053)

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The Role of the U.S. in the World

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The Role of the U.S. in the World

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The Role of the U.S. in the World

by Joe Escobar - Friday, April 21, 2017, 11:29 PM

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Isolationist Path: Where Does It Go?

by Cameron Wray - Sunday, April 23, 2017, 6:56 PM

On the internationalist to isolationist spectrum I find myself near the middle but leaning more towards the isolationist side. My main reasoning for that being some of our countries problems should take precedence over what other countries are doing. Maybe if we could dial back our involvement just a little bit some of our issues might get more attention like the national debt. This is assuming our involvement costs the country money which admittedly I'm not 100% sure about.

I thought Ron Paul brought up a lot of great points about our involvement in other countries that actually reflected what we've learned about exceptionalism. In the Ron Paul vs McCain video, Paul says "I don't want to send our troops overseas using force to tell them how to live, we would object to it here and they're going to object to us over there" (1:42) which I can't help but agree with. Obviously I don't know all of the reasons for the U.S. involvement with other countries but sometimes it comes off as we think we can do what we want because we're the most powerful nation. I'm reluctant to say that the withdrawal of our troops all over the world would go well though because I really have no idea what the ramifications would be. It doesn't sound like something that would work out as well as Ron Paul puts it.

I understand with intervention we can prevent terrible things from happening like war and that being too much of an isolationist contributed to allowing "Hitler to come to power" according to John McCain (0:27). The ability to prevent these things is why I agree that something like the League of Nations was necessary then and still is today. It's on this front that I believe America's involvement is necessary in other countries affairs.

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cases for non-intervention

by Amber Leonard - Sunday, April 23, 2017, 7:23 PM

I somewhat agree with Ron Paul in his interview. "You can't use force of arms to invade other countries to make them better people. Our job is to make us a better people" (Ron Paul interview video 7:29). The U.S needs to focus more on our problems here at home. Instead of worrying about other countries. We should do our best to make sure all our citizens have food, water, and shelter before we go try to fix other countries. When Ron was asked if we don't attack them there they will attack us here, Ron's response was, "And I think the opposite is true. I think the fact that we occupy their territories we have angered even more people now, our occupation has expanded tremendously from what it was like before 9/11 and yet the radicals were able to use our bases in Saudi Arabia and bombing in Iraq as a reason to come over here" (Ron Paul interview video 7:36) I also agree with Ron that we don't need to attack other countries first. We don't need to try to intervene with other countries affairs, because when we do that we just create enemies and make other countries now want to attack us. Maybe if we didn't get into their business in the first place we wouldn't have the issue of them attacking us. The U.S shouldn't go into things that are not our business unless asked to or provoked to. Now if a country attacks the U.S then by all means we should attack that country and make sure it doesn't happen again.

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Re: cases for non-intervention

by Cameron Wray - Wednesday, April 26, 2017, 4:17 PM

I also "somewhat" agree with Ron Paul in the videos we watched. I found his line, "it's the lack of diplomacy that is the greatest threat, not the weapons" (7:06) to be very intriguing and also a little bit in line with what we discussed in class about Woodrow Wilson wanting to countries to slow down on the militarism and race to arms. Paul also brought up a great point "under the constitution we don't have the authority to just put troops in foreign countries" (5:20). I have no idea what would happen if the U.S. was to withdraw all the

troops from every country and maybe some are needed in certain countries but I don't understand the reason for troops being in so many places. There may have been a reason at some point in history for us to deploy troops there but what are they still doing there?

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Re: cases for non-intervention

by Kiet Bui - Friday, April 28, 2017, 1:46 PM

I agree with your and Ron Paul's point of view on "making us a better people". However, I disagree that becoming an isolationist country would cause no enemies to the U.S. because the problems and aggressions are results of many factors other than military interventions. Would you agree as the world currently richest, most powerful, influential nation, the U.S. has a lot of competitors. In the history, rivalries often caused wars (e.g. WWI, WWII,...). With that in mind, the U.S. would have to expand its power to prevent such threats, and as a result get involved in wars for its own interests.

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Re: The Role of the U.S. in the World

by Young Bin Choi - Monday, April 24, 2017, 1:33 PM

Coming and being born from a different country, I've never been much involved into the government of the United States and the past. Although I've been in the United States for a few years, my origin has never changed and my support for it has never altered. The presidential election that occurred last year was a huge shock to me. Not going in too much depth in to politics, the proposals and the pledges by the two candidates were obvious. As an international student, I couldn't agree with the current president Donald Trump. United States remaining as a isolationist country along with President Trump's idea of "Making America Great Again" is a great solution for the Americans. However, I believe that living alone in the contemporary world is impossible. As American's national debt is currently around 20 trillion dollars and continuing to rise, the idea of becoming an isolationist seems to not be the ideal representation. Following on Ron Paul Interview by Libertarian, I was shocked of how Candidate Ron Paul supported the idea of isolationism. As United States is certainly the strongest country in the world, many weaker countries do expect to side with the United States so that they can receive aid in emergencies. Ron Paul's statement upon how United States should've never been part of the Korean War, Vietnamese War, Iraq War, etc because United States isn't the World's "police". However, we don't live in an utopia. We have threats all around the world and being a Korean, I was enforced to enroll in to the army to fight against North Korea. I believe that it totally depends on who the contemporary president of this powerful country is. Henry Cabot Lodge, a senator strongly opposed against President Woodrow Wilson's idea of entering the League of Nations, would perfectly match the contemporary system of the government. Although President Woodrow Wilson failed to have United States enter the League of Nations, he supported the idea of Internationalism.

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Re: The Role of the U.S. in the World

by Kiet Bui - Friday, April 28, 2017, 1:26 PM

As your fellow international student, I can totally relate to your standpoint, and I am certain that the U.S. alliance with South Korea is very important to you, but there is something I want to point out about Donald Trump. In one of our articles "The Four Foreign Policies", Donald Trump was put under "a different space" from the internationalism or isolationism spectrum. I totally agree with this. Trump's America would treat international relations as a "financial drain".

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Re: The Role of the U.S. in the World

by Brandon Gericke - Monday, April 24, 2017, 2:04 PM

I would say that the case for intervention really stems from a moral high ground and a need to stop history from repeating itself, for example WWII when John McCain stated that isolationism allowed Hitler to come into power. People who think that we need to help keep the world safe would be in favor of a more internationalist/intervention role.

The Non-Intervention case stems from a "take care of our own" and "its not our job to police the world" kind of philosophy. I think this is partly in due to fear of american intervention in any country being seen as imperialism. People who acknowledge the issues at home and want to fix them before other countries, would be more in favor of this type of role.

Personally I believe that if you can help then you should help. This applies to countries in my opinion as well. I served in the Navy as a corpsman for 5 years, and in that time I had been on humanitarian missions to Haiti and the Philippines. I had also deployed to Afghanistan and Djibouti. Each one of these deployments showed me how much other countries value the help they receive from The United States.

John McCain's statement that isolationism allowed for Hitler to rise to power really made sense to me. Had countries other than Germany stepped in, then maybe things would have gone differently. I believe this is the significance of our inability to ratify the treaty or join the league.

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Ron Paul and the role of the US

by Jordan Okoniewski - Monday, April 24, 2017, 4:10 PM

Foreign policy, especially in the realm of war, is an incredibly complex and polarizing issue. While being interviewed by ABC news, Ron Paul is pretty point blank given a list of wars, and asked "do you support this one, do you support this one?" And time and time again his answer is no. Ron Paul is famous for having a very unique attitude towards foreign policy at the time, especially amongst conservative politicians – that America's interventions in other countries often have long lasting, violent repercussions. He is even bold enough to cite

Osama Bin Laden as a source of this theories. Though this is an incredibly risky political move, he has a point – American intervention for the sake of nation building has several times created power vacuums (Iraq) that have led to destabilization and the deaths of both American troops, and the civilians of the region.

He justifies and further defines this by saying we should limit war to the intended purpose outlined in the US Constitution, which is politically very savvy, although honestly the interpretation of the Constitution is SO contentious at this point that I feel he should maybe instead stick to quotes from the books he gave Rudy Giuliani. American defense should be our primary concern, letting other nations figure out their conflicts for themselves. However, as he is emphatic to clarify in the debate with Alan Keyes though, he does believe in the powers of soft diplomacy - things like trade and meetings.

As this is a situation we repeatedly find ourselves in, I think we should be more upfront about the very possible consequences of foreign intervention.

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Re: Ron Paul and the role of the US

by Jordan Okoniewski - Monday, April 24, 2017, 4:16 PM

I do have some disagreements with Ron Paul's foreign policy, though once again it's so complex. How do you not come to the aid of people when genocide is being committed?

Paul gets a bit of a pass on the question of whether he thought WWII was justified; he makes it an issue of Pearl Harbor, and conveniently the interviewer doesn't ask about Germany and the Holocaust. In my mind though, there is a difference between conflicts like Korea and Vietnam where our main goal was preventing communism from spreading, and situations like Rwanda, where a group of people are being brutally slaughtered. In a world where everything could be seen as subjective, genocide is one thing I feel incredibly comfortable taking a stand against. However, that doesn't mean that the consequences of involvement won't be violent and long lasting. As I said, it's an incredibly complex issue, with no one right answer.

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Re: Ron Paul and the role of the US

by Brandon Gericke - Friday, April 28, 2017, 11:40 AM

I agree. Genocide is definitely something that I feel we should take a stand against. I think the United States decision to stay out of WWII allowed for so many more horrible things to happen than would have if we joined the war at the beginning. Rwanda is an example of where we failed as a world leader to step in and fix the issues that an imperialistic Belgium caused. The same thing may be said about Syria in the future. I also agree that Vietnam and Korea were much different than Rwanda. Vietnam and Korea was for political reasons. The decisions to stay out of Rwanda was also political.

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Re: Ron Paul and the role of the US



by Alexis Heasley - Friday, April 28, 2017, 9:13 PM

Like Brandon said, I agree we need to take genocide into account and stand united to fight against any acts of this sort of inhuman violence. Genocide has been incredibly significant in our nation's history, and I agree with some of your statements regarding U.S involvement in foreign affairs. I find I may have to slide down the spectrum in terms of my opinion, there are some cases in which the United States needs to be present and involved. If each country closed its borders we could only be so successful as we are interdependent with other countries in terms of imports of things exclusive to various regions. A healthy balance between the nations is important, however I still stand beside my opinion in which the government needs to tend to the American people first and foremost. Ron Paul says in the video, "To spread our goodness overseas it usually requires force. We're speeding our goodness in Iraq, we can't do that without dropping bombs on them and killing a lot of people." (Paul 00:44)

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Spectrum of Internationalism in U.S. History

by Matthew Molinari - Monday, April 24, 2017, 11:42 PM

After reading all the articles, and watching all the videos, I find myself closest to the position of a mild internationalist. I agree with the platform that the U.S. should have the ability to get involved in foreign affairs, either militarily or not, "but consciously restraining its exercise of power.." as Krauthammer wrote about Hillary's specific position. My opinion reflects the opposite of the american public after the end of WW1, as championed by Senator Henry Lodge, as the text book stated on page 774, "More and more Americans—perhaps even a majority—were coming to believe that U.S. intervention had been a mistake." This was a direct contrast with that of Wilson's mentality, which was that of a strong internationalism that would have formed the back bone of the League of Nations.

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Ron Paul Clip.

by Katlyn Smelcer - Monday, April 24, 2017, 11:51 PM

Although I don't completely agree with Ron Paul's views, I did agree with some things he said. For instance Ron Paul is asked "Is war ever justifiable?" and Ryan replies, "If you're attacked you have a right and an obligation to defend your country" (5:30 into Ron Paul interview). I completely agree that there are times when the U.S. needed to intervene because we were under attack but we've also gone to war for way less. Then Ron Paul is asked about 9/11 and if the U.S. should have intervened and he says this, "Go after those involved in 9/11," (5:55 in Ron Paul Clip). He then goes on to say that the U.S. should not have tried to occupy and change an entire country and that it would still be a problem today. I do agree with this although I'm not sure how we would just go after the terrorists but he was right in saying that the U.S. is still going to be dealing with this problem and is growing (6:18 into Ron Paul Clip).

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America should think of the world's interests.

by Kiet Bui - Monday, April 24, 2017, 11:54 PM

In his interview, Ron Paul expressed himself as a isolationist, who believe that most, if not all, American involvements in international affairs are completely unjustified.

Personally, I think that the America should be involved with other nations' events, because as a world's power, it should be doing needed actions to keep the balance of the world. However, I share his point of views that many of U.S. interventions are failures. The reasons why Ron Paul was an isolationist is because of the consequences that resulted from those interventions. He believed that without the U.S. presence, things could have turned out better.

So here is what I have in mind: the reason why those interventions turned out badly, is because the U.S. was acting for its interests, not for the sake of world's peace. For example, U.S. didn't like communism, so it went fighting against it in Korea, Vietnam.

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Re: America should think of the world's interests.

by Brandon Gericke - Friday, April 28, 2017, 11:59 AM

I think you said it best. If the USA would act for the interests of common good and not a political or financial agenda, more of our interventions would be successful. I think staying out of the worlds issues will just cause more issues for us down the line,

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Position of the spectrum.

by Kiet Bui - Friday, April 28, 2017, 2:24 PM

I support the points of view of the "Mild Internationalists". The limited internationalists post WWI would have argued that even though Wilson's 14 points may cause the U.S. to fight against its people's will, but if the League of Nations had been fully established, then there wouldn't have been any wars at all. The reason is all the strongest, most dangerous country are tied into this treaty, that they cannot attack each other without violating it.

I think the 14 points are too ideal to be realized; it didn't matter if the treaty of Versailles was ratified by Congress or not. Wilson try to tie all these countries together without giving them any interests being a part of it. Why would those imperialist European countries want to attach themselves to a treaty that would stop them from taking land, power, wealth of others? That was why most of the crucial points were not fulfilled.

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internationalist /isolationist spectrum

by Alexis Heasley - Tuesday, April 25, 2017, 12:00 AM

The provided information offered interesting insight on foreign policy, and my position on the spectrum. The need for U.S troops in other areas of the world during times of war, or not times of war has been excessive. There are a number of problems we face as a nation that should be our main focus. In the video Ron Paul is interviewed, his belief - "the United States should not be the worlds policeman." (00:09) Its hard for me to disagree because, if these countries are not a threat to the American people we do not need to put ourselves in their issues. Trying to "better" another country by our terms as Americans may be seen as a threat to their way of life to another. We cannot solve all worldly conflicts, we surely cannot even solve many of our own issues locally. It's important that the United States tends to it's own, before stepping into the face of another.

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Re: Intervention vs. non-intervention

by Luz Fandino - Tuesday, April 25, 2017, 11:53 PM

When I first started reading the cases for and against the non-intervention issues I didn't know where I stood in the internationalist<---->isolationist spectrum. However as I continued on I began to get more drawn to Ron Paul's perspective for non-intervention. He is for non-intervention because: 1) he believes "the U.S. shouldn't be the worlds policemen," 2) he thinks "it's okay to help people, but spreading democracy and spreading our "goodness" doesn't work because it requires force," 3) "you can't use force of arms to invade other countries and make them a better people, our job is to make us a better people," and 4) If anything, we've angered more people by occupying their land—not intervening means that we not only have less enemies but we also save money by bringing our troops home (Paul's interview clip). While intervention vs. non-intervention is a tough topic to gain a position on, partly because many of the pro intervention arguments seem to try and guilt trip you, Paul brought up many valid points that in the end helped me find my position on the spectrum.

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Re: Intervention vs. non-intervention

by Cameron Wray - Friday, April 28, 2017, 9:07 AM

I have expressed my support for some of what Ron Paul has said from the videos about isolationism, specifically in regards to what our involvement is doing to our national debt. As Paul phrased it "we can't afford it anymore, we're going broke" (5:32) when speaking about why we should withdraw our troops from all countries. And while I do think a mass exodus such as this one would bring about a whole new world of problems the results would be fascinating. It's hard to imagine if something like that were to happen what the ramifications might be. For one I think the landscape of foreign policy would be vastly different at least for a while. Sort of like how there were no democrats elected in the 1920's

I think depending on how good or bad it went one political part might thrive and one might suffer in terms of decades. At this point I feel like it's becoming one of our only options to actually soften the national debt.

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intervention issues

by Trevor Remington - Wednesday, April 26, 2017, 9:37 PM

Ron paul talks in his interview(2min mark) about how we should not have got involved in the Korean conflict,Vietnam or the early Iraq conflict. that they were boarder wars and not our problem. That's fine and all but look what was happening in those conflicts to the civilians who are just trying to live their lives. Being killed and told to live their lives a certain way. i think it is our job as a stronger nation to help out with those kinds of problems. I think Alan Keyes says it best at(:40 seconds into the video on the crisis of Darfur) " we cannot retreat into a fortress America we are a nation of nations". I believe we should try to stay out of foreign conflicts as much as possible, as a bigger country it feels like we should help the people who cant help themselves though as long as it does not break America at the same time.

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Misunderstanding Henry Cabot Lodge

by Cameron Wray - Friday, April 28, 2017, 9:10 AM

When reading about Henry Cabot Lodge I almost immediately disregarded him as someone that was just on the far right of the spectrum to oppose how far left Wilson was in regards to joining the League of Nations. Then we discussed his specific issue with joining the league which was article X because it "gave the League the right to undertake military actions against aggressor nations" (textbook p 766) and now I understand why Wilson was met with so much opposition. Say what you will about the constitution but one of the things it got right was who decides if the country goes to war. That is a stance I can fully get behind 100% which isn't something I declare often.

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Henry Cabot Lodge and the problem with "the spectrum"

by Jordan Okoniewski - Saturday, April 29, 2017, 3:49 PM

Henry Cabot Lodge's main reason for opposing the League of Nations was that he believed America should have the sovereignty to go to war not when dictated by a powerful international body, but rather by the powers of congress and "united will of the American people." (historynewsnetwork.com). For this he gets painted as an isolationist, but as the Flemming article points out, Lodge was actually quite a big supporter of America's actions in WWI, the Spanish American War, and the Chinese Open Door policy, not to mention several other foreign incidents mentioned in the article. This illustrates the problem of using just a two sided spectrum to put people on - you can do it, but a lot of times you end up with a really reductive understanding of people's intentions. It seems that Henry Cabot Lodge WAS an internationalist, but also a nationalist too. I would say this stance is in line with a lot of Republican politicians today.

Two things that I find interesting in this article is that it claims Lodge wanted war to only be declared (as I mentioned above) by the united will of the American people. However, I can't think of a single war in American history that was unanimously supported. There's always an opposition party. Secondly, it claims that he didn't want the League to put America in a war against its will. However, when you consider the 63 countries (including Great Britain, France, Spain, Italy, and for a time Germany) who were at one point or another members of the League of Nations, it's hard to comprehend anyone wanting to go to war with that body. I think it's easier to imagine that Lodge (who "believed American idealism could become a more significant force in world affairs than the often "sordid" imperialism of Britain, France and Russia, who dominated two thirds of the globe." - historynewsnetwork.com) didn't want anyone to try to check America's ability to throw its weight around in global affairs.

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Paul, Spectrums, and Lodge

by Eden Stellavato - Saturday, April 29, 2017, 9:21 PM

Immediately I recognized Ron Paul's position and where he was coming from. Like that which was discussed in Chapter 22 and Americas hopeful imperialism, Paul would have apposed. During the "Ron Paul Interview" he said that we should basically bring everyone home and stay out of everyone's business. Comparing this to imperialistic views from a early 20th century America, to me, creates the left right spectrum. Paul being the grumpy grandpa residing on the right, and Young America/ Imperialistic views for a world power ready to run out the door on the left. Even though when you think of imperialism you think of war, control, and non-accommodation towards sovereign nations, in this spectrum it would be labeled as internationalist. This is where I would stand because it is a progressive stance. Alan Keyes say's (at 0:58 in "Alan Keyes on Darfur") "I don't believe we cannot turn our back on that universal significance" referring to allying and being stationed around the world. This further proves that having troops or an American presence is more useful than not. The other somewhat obvious connection is Paul and Lodge. You can make the argument to call them similar because of Lodges distaste towards Wilson and his (left side views) to sign in the League of Nations. Lodge didn't want the U.S. involved in other countries business, Paul didn't either.

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Re: 2016 Presidential candidates

by Luz Fandino - Saturday, April 29, 2017, 11:50 PM

After reading the Washington Post article about the foreign policy positions of the 2016 Presidential candidates I found myself not really relating to any of them. While Bernie Sanders' position is idealistic I'm not sure that it's all that realistic. Hilary Clinton is an internationalist who is all for foreign intervention, this is a position I don't completely support. Then there is Ted Cruz, who is much like that generation of people during Roosevelt's time, eager to be a part of a war. And of course our current president, Donald Trump, who wants to run this country like a business which I don't believe is the best way to run a country. If you would've asked me which candidate I related to most pre-election time, I would've probably initially said

Bernie Sanders but just like the author of the article, I too realized his position on issues was much to idealistic rather than realistic. All in all I think our candidates for president this last year did not fully reflect the needs and concerns of our nation as a whole.

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