

America's policing role: policy of interventionism essay

Countries, United States



The self-imposed role of the U. S. as “ the policeman of the world” has resulted in numerous international interventions that draw either the ire or the appreciation of various states. Whether in the form of economic assistance or military intervention, the U. S. has taken an active role in global affairs which costs the country billions of dollars annually due to the inherent expense of such endeavors (Codevilla 42). This policy of interventionism is based on the supposed superiority of America's ideology of democracy and its assumption that it has a predestined role to spread such tenets to other countries.

America's post-civil war foreign policy was largely influenced by the desire to sustain the security of the union as well as uphold the tenets of democracy that led to the creation of the U. S. in the first place. This resulted in a foreign policy that initially focused on securing its borders while at the same time implementing a mostly isolationist stance (also termed as America's “ Splendid Isolationism”).

This policy changed over time as the U. S. continued to take a more active role in international affairs due to its economic and military might. America's military intervention in numerous international incidents over the past five years is, in large part, an extension of its initial foreign policy directives of protecting the state and upholding democracy. However, this has been altered into protecting the country via ensuring international peace and spreading democracy rather than just upholding it (Ignatieff 42).

Evidence of this can be seen in America's intervention in Syria's civil war as well as its actions involving China's continued expansion into the West

Philippine Sea. In the case of Syria, the military intervention of the U. S. in the form of weapons in training is due to its opposition to the dictatorial rule of Bashar Al-Assad. Its intervention in China's unethical and outright illegal expansion into the West Philippine Sea is a reflection of its security doctrine which focuses on mitigating potential threats to its security.

The rise of the U. S. into superpower status and its assumption of the role of " policeman of the world" can be traced to three distinct factors since 1865. The first is America's industrial expansion after this period which eclipsed that of the " traditional" European superpowers. Combined with its immigration policy, this enabled the U. S. to gain a substantial workforce which aided the country in rapidly expanding resulting in the creation of the foundation of America's economic might (Boix 3).

The second factor was the fact that the various industries in the U. S. were largely untouched after World War Two. This enabled the country to cater to the global demand for industrial goods that other countries could not provide. The last factor can be traced to the Truman Doctrine that provided support to various countries that were at risk of possible communist insurrection. This support cemented the role of the U. S. as " the policeman of the world" and helped to justify its initial international interventions due to the fear of communism that pervaded the country at the time (Foer 22).

With America's contributions helping to win the war against the Axis powers and the subsequent Cold War that followed, the influence that the U. S. gained was undeniable and it continues to be felt today as seen in the

reputation of the country and the healthy amount of respect the global community has towards America's economic and military capabilities (Marshall 7).

Since its rise to superpower status, the U. S. has been embroiled in various conflicts brought about due to its assumption of a "policing role" when it comes to maintaining international peace. Three of the most notable conflicts are seen in its intervention in Vietnam, its invasion of Iraq, and its present-day patrols in the West Philippine Sea against Chinese aggression. The driving force behind its policing actions in Vietnam was due to its desire to limit the spread of communism.

This was part of its ongoing cold war with the U. S. S. R and its foreign policy initiatives of preventing the spread of communism in whatever way it could. The U. S. invasion of Iraq was in large part, a direct result of the tragedy of 9/11 wherein terrorism, combined with the threat of WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction) resulted in the creation of a policy of military interventionism (Cox 3). When it comes to the actions of the U. S. in the West Philippine Sea, this is based on the actions of China and its illegal construction of artificial islands in a territory that is widely acknowledged as belonging to the Philippines. America's intervention in this area is based on its treaties with the Philippines as well as its policy of limiting aggressive unilateral foreign expansion.

Based on everything that has been stated so far, it can be stated that the policy of interventionism noted in this paper is based on the supposed

superiority of America's ideology of democracy and its assumption that it has a predestined role to spread such tenets to other countries. So long as this ideology exists, it is likely that America's self-imposed role as "policeman of the world" will continue as well.

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