

## A personal view of U. S. foreign policy

Written by By Michael Daly Guest Columnist  
Friday, 05 May 2023 03:09

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### History from WWI to 9/11

#### ***PART THREE OF FOUR***

America is a world leader and has much to be proud of. Our leadership in creating a liberal world order after WWII is outstanding. Henry Kissinger's book *Diplomacy* details almost endless wars in Europe. Something like 28 nations speaking 24 languages allowed for constant bickering and war.

America wanted to be isolationist, to mind our own business. William Drozdiak explains in his book *Fractured Continent*, we were drawn into both the First and Second World Wars. And for two decades after WWI, we stayed isolated while Communism, Nazism, Fascism and Japanese militarism gained strength.

At the end of WWII, statesmen in the U.S. and Europe developed a new liberal international order to help avoid these wars in the future. This liberal international order describes a set of global, rule-based, structured relationships based on [political liberalism](#) , [economic liberalism](#) and

[liberal internationalism](#)

since the late 1940s. More specifically, it entails international cooperation through

[multilateral](#)

institutions (like the

[United Nations](#)

,

[World Trade Organization](#)

and

[International Monetary Fund](#)

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) and is constituted by  
[human equality](#)  
(freedom, rule of law and human rights),  
[open markets](#)  
,  
[security cooperation](#)  
, promotion of  
[liberal democracy](#)  
, and  
[monetary cooperation](#)  
).

The order was established in the aftermath of [World War II](#) , led in large part by the [United States](#) . It has created the longest period of peace and prosperity Europe has ever known. But this order is a threat to Russia, China and North Korea.

The U.N. was the new version of the League of Nations that President Wilson proposed but our senate did not approve.

The United States has a persistent, unfortunate history of unilateral intervention in violation of our own signed treaties. In the Americas for example, there is the Organization of American States, an organization of all 35 independent states in the Americas including the U.S. Since we are members we are bound by its charter, including these articles:

Article 19. No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatsoever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. The foregoing principle prohibits not only armed force but also any other form of interference or attempted threat against the personality of the State or against its political, economic, and cultural elements.

Article 20. No State may use or encourage the use of coercive measures of an economic or political character in order to force the sovereign will of another State and obtain from it advantages of any kind.

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Article 21. The territory of a State is inviolable; it may not be the object, even temporarily, of military occupation or of other measures of force taken by another State, directly or indirectly, on any grounds whatsoever. No territorial acquisitions or special advantages obtained either by force or by other means of coercion shall be recognized.

Article 22. The American States bind themselves in their international relations not to have recourse to the use of force, except in the case of self-defense in accordance with existing treaties or in fulfillment thereof.

We have violated each of these by our actions in the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Chile, Guatemala, Nicaragua and other American states. What is our word worth? When did a U.S. President or Senator have a personal conversation with God that informed him that we are in charge of the Americas?

A review of some post WWII history. Harry Truman articulated the Truman Doctrine in 1947 stating that American foreign policy would support democracies against authoritarian threats. It was aimed at communist uprisings in Greece and Turkey and our efforts were successful. Then in 1950 when North Korea invaded South Korea we again supported South Korea, this time militarily after the United Nations Security Council denounced the North Korean move as an invasion and authorized the formation of the dispatch of forces to Korea. This war effort by the United States followed the rule of law by going through the United Nations.

In Vietnam, we did no such thing. We did not follow the rule of law. The 1954 Geneva Accords called for free elections and President Eisenhower did not allow these because it was estimated that free elections would find 80% of the population supporting Ho Chi Minh.

The erroneous assumption about the Domino Theory cost the lives of an estimated 1.3 million people. It also dealt a blow to U.S. credibility with its own citizens. So much so that the military moved from the draft to a professional army to fill its ranks.

Our next “big” action was the 1990-1991 First Iraq War. Authorized by the U.N, we led a group of nations in pushing Saddam Hussain from Kuwait.

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Osama bin Laden's attack on the U.S. on 9/11 was certainly a strategic blunder. Instead of pushing America away from the Mid East his ruthless attack incensed world opinion against him. But our response under the irresponsible leadership of George W. Bush was catastrophic for us. In the words of one retired West Point graduate:

"Our use of torture was repugnant. Un American. That, along with his lying us into war, is why I consider George W. Bush the most contemptible president in US history."

By 2003 the Bush Administration began the Second Gulf War by lying to us and the world about "weapons of mass destruction," merely an excuse to go to war. Bush took his case to the U.N., and they were not impressed. So, the U.S. started another illegal war. Illegal in the sense that it violated the U.N. Charter which we agreed to follow.

While the true cost of the Iraq war will never be fully known, Brown University researches put it at close to \$3 trillion. They also estimate that up to 580,000 people – civilians and combatants – have been killed in Iraq and Syria since 2003.

The question here is where is the American public's repudiation of these awful and unlawful efforts? I'm reminded of an example from the Korean War that led to what I think is now called the Military Code of Conduct.

The description was that there were 25 American prisoners of war huddling in a makeshift shack in freezing weather. One of the troops had diarrhea which was smelling up the place. At some point, one of the other prisoners forced this ailing soldier to leave the hut allowing him to freeze to death. The Army psychiatrists investigating this incident said they understood that there would be one in the group that would pursue such a policy, but what they couldn't countenance was that the other 23 soldiers allowed it to happen.

I wonder, is the American public so divorced from the actions of its military that it feels it has no responsibility in these matters or has America changed into what we thought we were fighting against?

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