

there of a terrorist network presents a threat to the world” (BBC monitoring, Aug. 14, 2004)

The news is also filled with suggestions that the U.S. might already be moving against Iran and has been for many months. As early as 2003, the Administration was reportedly drafting war plans against Iran, according to a Russian newspaper. In 2004, the world press reported new U.S. military arrangements with Azerbaijan and Kazakstan, in 2006, Seymour Hersh reported the presence of U.S. troops in Iran; and just a few weeks ago, *Time* magazine reported that “prepare to deploy” orders were given to the Eisenhower task force, a group of Navy ships, to go to the seas off Iran, which would result in their deployment by Oct. 21.

As ranking member of the National Security, International Relations and Emerging Threats subcommittee of the Government Reform Committee, I have been trying to conduct oversight to get to the bottom of these questions. We have written to the relevant agencies. We even held a classified briefing. But the Department of Defense and the State Department refused to show up.

I repeat, the Department of Defense and the State Department refused to submit to questions from a committee of Congress about actions and plans against Iran.

The American people have a right to expect that their government will work, and that Congress will conduct oversight, and that the executive branch will submit to Congress’ questions. What does it say when agencies refuse to appear to answer Congress’ questions?

Their refusal to be accountable is the reason we are here today. We have five of the nation’s top experts on these questions related to Iran. They have reviewed the open sources, they have a lifetime of relevant professional experience, and they are here to discuss what the Department of Defense and the rest of this Administration don’t want told to the American people: a sober assessment of Iran’s nuclear ambitions and what, if any, threat it poses to Americans, and the real story of the steps this Administration is taking toward another military confrontation in the Middle East.

Rep. Ron Paul

Interventionist U.S. Policy Is a Failure

Below is the statement by co-sponsor Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.) to the Oct. 11 Congressional oversight briefing.

I am pleased to co-sponsor this very important event with my colleague, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, and I appreciate all the effort his office has made in organizing such a distinguished panel to discuss our Iran policy. I would just like to say a few

words about U.S. foreign policy in general, and as it relates to Iran.

The current “crisis” with Iran clearly underscores the moral, intellectual, and practical failure of the interventionist foreign policy that the United States has been pursuing over the past several decades. In 1953 we gained the enmity of the Iranian people when our Central Intelligence Agency overthrew Iran’s popular and democratically elected leader, Mohammad Mossadegh, over a shift in Iran’s oil policy. The Shah was installed in power, and thus began an era of brutal, dictatorial rule. In 1979, the Iranian people rose up to throw out a regime they viewed as an American puppet and relations with Iran have been strained ever since. In the brutal Iran/Iraq war in the 1980s, the United States again intervened, this time on the side of Iraq, to whose leader we shipped weapons and intelligence. Shortly after that we were back in the region to invade our erstwhile ally, Iraq, whose leader had suddenly become intolerable to U.S. foreign policy. It is dizzying.

The problem with interventionism is primarily the problem of unintended consequences. The above typifies how complicated these interventions can turn when allies become enemies and then allies again, and we have to re-intervene to address problems created by our initial intervention. It goes around and around, and it costs us billions of dollars. It makes us enemies across the globe. Does anyone wonder why the U.S. is no longer held in high esteem overseas?

Our interventionist foreign policy often creates more problems than it solves. Take Afghanistan, for example. The very people the United States trained and supported in their struggle against the Soviet invasion became the Taliban, which, as we know, harbored the terrorists who planned and carried out the attacks against the United States on 9/11. Thus the very weapons and training we shipped to Afghanistan to intervene in that conflict more than 20 years ago were used against the United States when we invaded Afghanistan after 9/11. Talk about unintended consequences!

Who does not believe that all this could have been avoided if we could only finally return to the foreign policy that was so wisely counseled by our Founding Fathers? It is worth revisiting the oft-repeated but seldom heeded quote by our sixth President, John Quincy Adams:

[America] goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will commend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example. She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom.