

Another war could turn into another folly

Apr 1, 2011|

The American people have always been generous in times of natural disasters within this country, or in foreign lands. Americans have given their money, their resources and their manpower to aid others in troubled times. They have even given their lives on foreign soil when called upon.

The question arises: Is there a limit to this generosity? Does their generosity extend to depleting our own nation's treasury and affecting the lives of our military personnel and their families by our involvements in the civil strife and internal affairs of other nations?

In a very short period of time, the cost of America's involvement in Libya is approaching \$1 billion. Those 162 missiles fired from American warships cost over \$1 million apiece, plus the cost of aircraft flying over Libya at \$10,000 an hour.

There are those who already are saying we should "put boots on the ground" in Libya. A contingency of 2,200 Marines already has been sent to the Mediterranean. At a recent press briefing, Vice Admiral Bill Gortney, director of the Joint Chief of Staff, hinted that there is authorization for such action despite the fact that the president

promised "no boots on the ground" (if we haven't already put agents there).

This kind of action would put us into three battle zones. Afghanistan and Iraq already have cost us trillions of dollars and thousands of lives, with no clear end objective in sight. Are we nation-building or fighting an enemy? Will there be "mission creep" in Libya — that is, committing to a no-fly zone, then attacking Gadhafi's forces on the ground, then sending in troops?

The cost of the no-fly zone and military attacks on Gadhafi's forces could run as high as \$300 million per week. With an American national debt in excess of \$14 trillion and a deficit of \$1.65 trillion, how long will American generosity be able to afford these foreign interventions?

Aside from the economic costs, there are issues that concern our military personnel and their families. With deployments to Afghanistan three and four or more times by the same individuals, the military is being pushed to the stress limit. When this

Advertisement

Fast, convenient,
 AND affordable

Save on select
 Wireless*
 All-in-Ones,
 Photo Printers
 and Lasers

Save Today

Limited time offers

Shop Now >

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

stress reaches a breaking point, the result is PTSD and even suicide. The families of those involved suffer as well. The recent deployment of 2,200 Marines to the Mediterranean area will separate families for a year.

President Barack Obama has stated, "We can't solve all the world's problems." Clearly, problems do exist throughout the world, but problems that need to be addressed they also exist at home which need to be addressed. With a massive national debt and deficit, how do we continue on this path and still spend billions upon billions of dollars more aiding other countries with their internal problems while we continue to borrow money to finance this nation's needs?

Congressman Justin Amash of Michigan had this to say about our attacking Libya: "The cost to American taxpayers will be substantial. We cannot spend money we don't have on a war we don't need."

The words "humanitarian action" always sound good when we hear about engaging American military in other nations. However, once there is "collateral damage" — a euphemism for killing innocent civilians — or if there is the loss of life among our own military personnel, then the humanitarian aspect loses its luster. Too often we end up with regimes that were no better than the ones we help topple.

What is the next step if there is a regime change in Libya? As Colin Powell said about intervening in other countries, "You break it, then you bought it."

There can be reasonable arguments made about the illegal use of the military by the president in starting military action against Libya under the War Powers Act, but, it's already done. The question is, can we continue intervening in other nations internal affairs without economic and military consequences for America? Is there a limit to the generosity of Americans?

Doug Bandow, author of "Foreign Follies," summed up the situation very well: "The lives and treasure of Americans, especially those in the armed forces, should not be risked without something important for their own society. Military personnel are not gambit pawns to be sacrificed in some global chess game played by ivory-tower warriors."

Carl J. Asszony of Piscataway is the former veterans services coordinator for Middlesex County and host of the former radio program "The Veterans Roundtable" on WCTC-AM 1450.

Advertisement

Make it Yours™
Browse thousands of designs for over 3,000 devices.
Get 15% off with code: SAVE15

15% OFF

skinIt

[Browse Designs](#)

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™