



The Case Against Ron Paul Is Defeated

Ron Paul is persona non grata among establishment Republicans and other party loyalists — including and especially those in the mainstream “conservative” media.

On its face, the very idea that any self-professed lover of liberty should have anything but the utmost respect and admiration for Paul strikes us as a paradox of the first order. After all, to hear Republicans tell it, liberty consists in just those things — “limited government,” personal and fiscal responsibility, the U.S. Constitution, etc. — of which Paul has proven himself as adamant and impassioned a proponent as any. And yet, these very same Republicans deride him as a “nut,” a “fraud,” and, in some instances, a “racist,” an “anti-Semite,” and even an America-hater. Paul, they say, is no real conservative, for he befriends 9/11 “truthers” and “neo-Nazis.”



Occasionally, Paul’s GOP detractors suspend their efforts to assassinate his character by speaking to the substance of his positions on the issues. However, no sooner do they suspend their campaign of besmirching his person than one fallacy gives way to another as the ad hominem attack is replaced by the straw man fallacy. Whether through inadvertence or a genuine lack of understanding, it is never Paul’s actual views that they engage but their blatant misrepresentations of them.

Domestic Policy

Take Paul’s position on our drug policy. His critics argue that he favors the *legalization* of recreational drugs. They are mistaken. What Paul favors is an end to *the federal government’s ban* on drug usage for recreational purposes. That is, he believes that whether drugs should be legal or not is a question that properly, *constitutionally*, belongs to *the states* to address. If the residents of a state decide that they would prefer to maintain the current policy of the federal government, then so be it; they have *the right*, as far as Congressman Paul is concerned, to make that decision.

As far as his positions on marriage, prostitution, gambling, and virtually every other issue go, his reasoning is identical to that which informs his perspective on drug policy: it is *the individual states*, not the federal government, that the Constitution entrusts with the authority to settle these matters. Thus, Paul argues for the dismantling, not of *all* laws governing such activities, but of all *federal* laws designed to do so.

Paul’s Republican critics would be well served to attend to the Paul Derangement Syndrome that has overtaken them. You see, if Paul can be said to affirm the legalization of drugs and prostitution because of his stance that these are “states’ rights” issues, then, by parity of reasoning, every other self-



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proclaimed “pro-life” Republican who insists upon making *abortion* a “states’ rights” issue stands convicted of fraudulence, for they expose themselves as *proponents* of abortion.

That Paul is as strong and consistent a foe of abortion *no one* who knows of his record as an obstetrician would think to deny. This is telling, for it suggests that the distortions of his viewpoints spring not from ignorance, but bad faith. Anyone doubting this should just bear the following consideration in mind: Because Paul thinks that drug usage, prostitution, and gambling are matters with respect to which the federal government hasn’t the constitutional authority to speak, his objectors don’t hesitate to conclude that he champions their legalization. Yet when he makes the same claim about the federal government’s role vis-à-vis abortion — that is, when he makes *the same exact claim that they do* about *this* issue — his fellow Republicans do not so much as remotely suggest that he advocates the legalization of abortion. In convicting Paul of this, they would just as quickly condemn themselves. So maybe, just maybe, they *do* understand his positions on these other issues but refuse to justly characterize them.

Foreign Policy

It is really Paul’s position on *foreign policy* that incenses his critics to no end. As everyone knows, Ron Paul staunchly opposes what he refers to as “militarism,” a doctrine — sometimes euphemistically described by its apologists as “American Exceptionalism” — that calls for America to essentially “police” the globe against “human rights” violators or, what amounts to the same thing, the enemies of “democracy.” Since this enterprise has, within the last decade, been prosecuted in the name of combating Islamic terror, it is principally Paul’s objections against the assumptions, implications, and tactics of “the War on Terror” that have earned him both the contempt and *fear* of his competitors.

To begin with, Paul emphatically rejects the proposition — treated as an axiom by the Republican Party — that Muslims hate us because of our liberties and freedoms. Rather, it is a hyper-aggressive American foreign policy, he insists, with its occupation of and sanctions and wars against Islamic lands, that accounts for the rage that culminated in the attacks of 9/11.

For this position, Rick Santorum and legions of other representatives of the GOP establishment have blasted Paul for “blaming America” for the attacks. There are, though, at a minimum, three fatal problems with their approach.

First, an understanding of an agent’s action need not involve praise or blame. *Descriptive* statements are distinct from *prescriptive* statements: Just because something *is* such and such a way doesn’t necessarily mean that it *ought* to be that way, and just because one *thinks* that such and such is this way doesn’t mean that he either approves or disapproves of it. In our daily lives, most of us have no difficulty grasping this simple conceptual distinction between, on the one hand, *explanation*, and, on the other, *justification*. For some reason, a little elementary logic of this kind manages to elude Paul’s Republican rivals when it comes to his stance on the motivations informing those Muslims who want us dead.

Second, from Osama bin Laden to the 9/11 commission, from former CIA agents who spent decades in the Middle East to political science professor Robert Pape who, to date, has conducted the most extensive research into the reasons underlying Islamic terror, there is no short supply of authoritative sources from which Paul can readily draw in substantiating his position on the 9/11 attacks.

Finally, let us say for argument’s sake that Paul *did* intend to blame the U.S. government for inviting the 9/11 attacks. That the *government* is *not* equivalent to *the United States* should be obvious to any



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and every lover of liberty. If, by ascribing blame to the government, Paul can be said to be ascribing blame to *America*, then whenever any other Republican holds the government accountable for objectionable policies or outcomes — something that occurs incessantly — they too must be held to be “blaming” America.

As it stands, Republicans do themselves no service in conflating the federal government with the country itself. In hurling this bogus charge against Paul, they only contribute further to the growing perception among both the base of their party as well as independents that all of their talk of “limited government” and the like is just that: talk.

Iran

Paul has also taken considerable heat for failing to react with the same hysteria that the public has come to expect from Republicans when the subject of a nuclear-armed Iran arises. Now, few of us, including Paul, no doubt, *want* for Iran to be armed, and few of us, including Paul, support the Iranian regime. Yet none of this is in the least bit relevant to the question regarding *how* America should proceed in preventing a determined Iran from acquiring nuclear weaponry.

Paul recognizes that such preventive efforts must consist of actions that can only result in death and destruction: Whether America imposes sanctions or engages in military action of one kind or another, innocent Iranian (and possibly American) lives will be extinguished by our attempt to keep Iran from obtaining nuclear energy. He also recognizes that our military, already stretched to the snapping point, simply cannot afford (by any conceivable measure) to involve itself in but another “foreign entanglement,” especially in the Islamic world.

But if, as his Republican nemeses hold, Paul’s perspective on this matter is so unacceptable, then how is their view any better? On the one hand, the prospect of a nuclear armed Iran is one that they resolutely refuse to entertain: It is imperative that we prevent this state of affairs from materializing, they swear. However, on the other hand, not only have we long known that Iran was pursuing nuclear power, it began to expedite its pursuit *during the Bush administration*.

And yet, to date, no action has been taken to deter it. Moreover, no concrete action to impede its efforts has even been seriously proposed.

“Racism” and “Anti-Semitism”

I usually refuse to dignify accusations of “racism,” “anti-Semitism,” and the like with a response, but they warrant some mention in connection with this defense of Ron Paul.

Paul favors the elimination of *all* “foreign aid.” Because Israel is among the nations of the world to which the United States supplies financial assistance, some, like David Horowitz, have charged Paul with being “anti-Semitic.”

It is strange indeed that those who never tire of lamenting the ills afflicted by the Welfare State against black Americans and others at home should find fault with a man who seeks only to liberate Israel (and every other country) from the oppressive burdens of the American Welfare State abroad. Paul is actually a friend to Israel inasmuch as he wants for it to be able to give unabashed expression to its sovereignty — something that will be forever impossible as long as it remains dependent upon America.

Yet it is Paul’s detractors who want to maintain Israel’s dependence upon America who claim the moral high ground. It is they who are supposed to be the best friends of Israeli Jews.

As for the charge of “racism,” the widely respected black thinker Thomas Sowell is among many who



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have long noted that, whether measured in terms of street violence or rates of incarceration, the federal government's "War on Drugs" has had incalculable deleterious effects on black America. Paul has labored indefatigably to end this war. His accusers want to continue waging it. And it is his critics, not Paul, who insist upon displacing, injuring, and killing untold numbers of non-white peoples (Middle Eastern Muslims) through "the War on Terror" or George W. Bush's "Freedom Agenda." Paul not only wants to end the wars, at considerable cost to his presidential campaign and his popularity among the fellow members of his party, he has spared no occasion to articulate to audiences an understanding of the terrorists' motives that counters the conventional Republican account that reduces the Islamic terrorist to an embodiment of raw, undifferentiated irrationality. For this, this "racist" has been accused of "blaming America."

It is one thing to disagree with Congressman Paul. It is another thing to throw one baseless allegation after the other against him.



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