

Ron Paul's Political Platform for America: A Critical Assessment

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Compared to a rogue's gallery of Republican aspirants, supporters claim Paul looks good by comparison. Look again and think carefully about America in his hands.

True enough, he wants the Federal Reserve abolished. He calls it "dishonest, immoral, unconstitutional," and America's "great(est) threat to....security and prosperity."

"Out-of-control (and) secretive, (it) pumps money into the economy whenever it chooses and makes secret deals with Wall Street executives, foreign central banks, and other politically-connected insiders without any significant oversight from Congress."

Several times in Congress he introduced the Federal Reserve Abolition Act. Without co-sponsors, no further action followed.

Yet, restoring sound money and producing growth requires Fed abolition. Money power in private hands is scandalous. Returning it to public hands where it belongs is essential; namely, the US Treasury as the Constitution's Article I, Section 8 mandates.

Wanting America's wealth used for productive growth, Paul opposes squandering it on imperial wars. At the same time, his hard-right world view stops short of criticizing US imperialism and endorsing peace, despite saying:

"We can no longer afford to police the world, in terms of both dollars and American lives. We will destroy ourselves if we do not stop, build a strong national defense at home, and focus on commerce with the world instead of empire."

Nonetheless, he backed attacking Afghanistan, no matter its illegality. However, he strongly opposed war on Libya, saying:

"The current situation may be a short-term victory for empire, but it is a loss for our American Republic."

He also called Washington's involvement "unconstitutional," but stopped short of including all US post-WW II wars. Only Congress, not presidents, can declare war under UN Charter provisions. None were since December 8, 1941.

Addressing the House in October 2002, Paul's main opposition to attacking Iraq was over ceding congressional power to Bush. It was also about giving UN members say over US foreign interventions and undermining national defense by costly spending and overstressing US military forces.

Rather than UN resolutions, he “like(s) it more when the president speaks about unilateralism and national security interests.” When America “depends on the UN for our instructions, we end up in no-win wars.”

Paul left international law unexplained. Supporting congressional power on war, not the executive, he omitted under what conditions belligerence by one state against another is justified.

UN Charter power is inviolate. Article 2(3) and Article 33(1) require peaceful settlement of international disputes. Article 2(4) prohibits force or its threatened use. And Article 51 allows the “right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member....until the Security Council has taken measures to maintain international peace and security.”

In other words, justifiable self-defense is permissible. However, Charter Articles 2(3), 2(4), and 33 absolutely prohibit any unilateral threat or use of force not:

specifically allowed under Article 51;

authorized by the Security Council; or

permitted by the US Constitution only amendments ratified by three-fourths of the states can change.

Although he knows better, he said Bush I “didn’t go all the way” in 1991 because “the UN did not give him permission to.” Going “through the back door” with UN-declared wars lets them “last longer and you do not have a completion, like we had in Korea and Vietnam.”

Weeks after Bush II invaded Iraq, he promoted his American Sovereignty Restoration Act to “end US membership of the United States in the United Nations.”

He also credited Bush for “ultimately upholding the principle that American national security is not a matter of international consensus, and that we don’t need UN authorization to act.”

In other words, he believes “the supreme law of the land” under the Constitution’s Supremacy Clause (Article VI, Clause 2) doesn’t matter even though all treaty obligations automatically become US law.

He warned that if America didn’t leave the UN, its “global planners” would establish “true world government” that would “interfere not only in our nation’s foreign policy matters, but in our domestic (ones) as well (and) America as we know it will cease to exist.”

He’s also against police state laws like the USA Patriot Act, though not for the right reasons. Key for him is loss of personal privacy.

While advocating free trade, he’s against NAFTA, DR-CAFTA, and other one-sided FTAs. They serve special interests, not everyone equitably.

Saying prohibition laws negate freedom, he calls the war on drugs “costly and ineffective, while creating terrible violent crime.” It’s also largely responsible for the world’s largest gulag. Filled mostly with nonviolent offenders, at most they deserve reprimands or fines, and those incarcerated for drug-related crimes deserve freedom.

As a libertarian, he believes government's only role is to respect, protect, and defend personal liberties.

As the Libertarian Party's Preamble states:

Everyone should retain "sovereign(ity) over their own lives," not "sacrifice (it) for the benefit of others."

In other words, government's responsibility for universal healthcare, education, and other essential services is incompatible with personal freedom. Everyone should be on their own to provide them, even though millions, through no fault of their own, can't.

In contrast, progressives have different view of freedom and responsibility. They believe government must assure equity, social justice, and safety net protections for society's least advantaged. Throwing them overboard can't be tolerated.

Paul's Background

Paul served on and off in Congress since 1976. In 1988, his Libertarian Party presidential campaign failed. So did his 2008 Republican bid. Instead of running as a Libertarian or independent, he endorsed Constitution Party candidate Chuck Baldwin.

He's also a practicing obstetrician and gynecologist. Reportedly, he delivered thousands of babies.

In 1976, he founded the Foundation for Rational Economics and Education (FREE). It's "dedicated to public education on the principles of free-market economics, sound money and limited government."

His books include "Gold, Peace, and Prosperity;" "Challenge to Liberty;" "Freedom Under Siege;" "Ten Myths About Paper Money;" and "The Case for Gold." In 1989, a FREE spinoff called the National Endowment for Liberty (NEFL) was established to disseminate more information about its ideology.

Paul's Ten Principles of a Free Society

(1) Personal freedom.

(2) Support for all peaceful, voluntary economic and social associations.

(3) The inviolable right to justly acquired property.

(4) Opposition to government redistributing wealth or special privileges to any individual, group or business.

(5) The inviolability of individual sovereignty. Governments must never protect people from themselves.

(6) Governments must never claim monopoly power over a people's money nor engage in official counterfeiting for any purpose.

(7) Opposition to aggressive wars, no matter their stated purpose.

(8) Jury nullification, pertaining to jurors judging the law as well as related facts.

(9) Opposition to all forms of involuntary servitude, including slavery, conscription, forced association, and mandated welfare distribution.

(10) Requiring governments, like people, to obey laws, abstain from force to coerce behavior, manipulate social outcomes, manage the economy, or tell other countries how to behave.

Paul's Plan to Restore America

Its elements include:

(1) Balancing the budget.

(2) Cutting \$1 trillion in his administration's first year by eliminating five departments (Energy, HUD, Commerce, Interior and Education), abolishing the Transportation Security Administration, ending corporate subsidies, halting foreign aid, prohibiting foreign wars, and returning most spending to 2006 levels.

(3) Entitlements: Maintaining them for seniors and veterans, but letting younger workers opt out toward eventually ending them altogether. Block-granting Medicaid and other social programs to states. In other words, transition Washington entirely out of social spending.

(4) Cutting the federal workforce by 10%. Slash congressional pay and perks, and curb excess federal travel.

(5) Lowering corporate taxes to 15%. Let US companies repatriate capital tax-free. Extend all Bush tax cuts, and abolish income, capital gains, estate and personal savings taxes.

(6) Repealing Obamacare, Dodd-Frank financial reform, and Sarbanes-Oxley, pertaining to new or enhanced standards for corporations, top officials and public accounting firms. Also, mandating REINS requirements, pertaining to congressional up or down votes on all proposed measures with economic impact over \$100 million. Moreover, abolish all onerous regulations by Executive Order.

(7) Conducting full Federal Reserve audits, and implement competing currency legislation to strengthen the dollar and stabilize inflation.

Paul on Other Issues

(1) Taxes: Abolish income, capital gains, and estate taxes, as well as the IRS. Provide more tax credits and deductions. Rely on excise taxes, non-protectionist tariffs, fees, and minimal corporate ones.

(2) Energy: Remove all restrictions on drilling, mining and nuclear power. Repeal federal taxes on gasoline. Abolish the EPA, and provide tax credits as incentives to develop and produce alternative energy technologies.

(3) Immigration: Enforce border security to keep undocumented immigrants out. Prohibit amnesty and social benefits for those here, and end automatic birthright citizenship for their children born on US soil.

(4) Abortion: Repeal Roe v. Wade granting abortion rights up to viability (fetal survival outside the uterus). Define life as beginning at conception, even for rape victims.

(5) Gun Ownership: Assure the Second Amendment's right to bear arms even though it pertains to militia rights "to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions."

Repeal the Brady Bill and Assault Weapons Ban restricting firearms purchases, and end US support for global gun control laws and other initiatives. Presidents, says Paul, should "be 100% committed to defending our God-given right to keep and bear arms," even those most destructive apparently.

(6) Right to Work: Without saying so, he opposes hard-won labor rights, including failed Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) provisions to let workers "form, join, or assist labor organizations, to provide for mandatory injunctions for unfair labor practices during organizing efforts, and other purposes."

Paul on Israel

Paul emphatically denies accusations of racism and anti-Semitism. He calls Israel one of America's "most important friends."

He supported Israel attacking Iraq's Osirak reactor in June 1981. He also believes America should be less involved in its affairs. "They can take care of themselves," he said. "Why do we have this automatic commitment that we're going to send our kids and send our money endlessly to Israel?"

"I am personally against all foreign aid. We give \$3 billion to Israel....It is ridiculous for us to be borrowing money from China and giving it to" other countries.

"The First Amendment grants all citizens the right to petition the US government, and this applies to AIPAC as much as anyone else. However, I oppose certain lobbying groups having more of an undue influence than others, and since one of the main purposes of AIPAC is to lobby for generous taxpayer subsidies to Israel, that portion of their influence would end under my administration."

Racism Accusations

Truth and fiction define them. In 1992, commenting to on the Los Angeles riots, his newsletter said "(o)rder was only restored in LA when it came time for the blacks to pick up their welfare checks three days after rioting began."

It added that looting resulted from government providing Black communities with "civil rights, quotas, mandated hiring preferences, set-asides for government contracts, gerrymandered voting districts, black bureaucracies, black mayors, black curricula in schools, black TV shows, black TV anchors, hate crime laws, and public humiliation for anyone who dares question the black agenda."

He also denounced America's media support for establishing "an unlimited white checking account for underclass blacks."

On January 8, 2008, New Republic contributor James Kirchick added more, quoting Paul's newsletter saying:

"(I)f you have ever been robbed by a black teen-aged male, you know how unbelievably fleet-footed they can be."

It called Black representative Barbara Jordan "the archetypical half-educated victimologist (whose) race and sex protect her from criticism."

"Racial Violence Will Fill Our Cities (because) mostly black welfare recipients will feel justified in stealing from mostly white 'haves.' "

"Jury verdicts, basketball games, and even music are enough to set off black rage, it seems."

Whether or not Paul wrote or endorsed these and other comments isn't clear. However, they appeared in newsletters bearing his name. He now disavows them. According to his 2008 campaign spokesman, Jesse Benton:

Paul granted "various levels of approval" to newsletter material, ranging from "no approval" to material he actually wrote. However, he never saw many issues so attributing comments in them to him appear suspect.

Responding to charges about hanging out with white supremacists, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and other extremist views, Texas NAACP president Nelson Linder said he's known Paul for 20 years not to be racist. In fact, he called Martin Luther King a "hero."

He also condemned police repression in Black communities and discriminatory mandatory sentencing rules directed mostly at them.

A Final Comment

Paul's America endorses personal freedom, abolishing social spending, leaving everyone on their own sink or swim, reducing government's size, minimally taxing corporations and super-rich elites, freeing them to operate as they wish, and returning the nation largely to 19th century harshness.

If elected, supporters may get more than they bargained for and not government serving everyone equitably, especially society's least advantaged through no fault of their own.

The Constitution's "general welfare" clause (Article I, Section 8) states:

"The Congress shall have power to....provide for (the) general welfare of the United States," meaning all citizens. The Preamble's opening words are "We the People."

Increasingly, they're just words. Under Paul, they'll be abolished. Know what you'll get by supporting him.

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Also visit his blog site at www.sjlendman.blogspot.com and listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network Thursdays at 10AM US Central time and Saturdays and Sundays

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