

Moral obligation or arrogance

No to U.S. involvement

By Anna Lee
Voice Staff Writer

George Washington once said, "Beware of foreign entanglements."

There must be a good reason why more than 200 years ago our first president urged us to stay out of foreign affairs. It is trouble.

Despite what we as Americans think of our country the truth is that we are probably one of the most hated on earth. Why? We are seen as know it all's with our 'save the world' attitude. We think that our way is the only way, the RIGHT way.

Take the revolts in Libya, for example. Obama recently stated his opinion that Qadhafi must leave his power immediately. He is also considering military intervention in the area. Of course what is happening in Libya is sad and any person with morals would want to help them but I don't think we should. Why do we show so much interest in other countries when the citizens in our own country are suffering? How can we consider military intervention when this country is in such dire financial straits?

Not a lot of focus is put on it, but a lot of Americans are living in poverty. A majority of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck. People are getting cut from their jobs every day. Those that are lucky enough to have jobs are suffering pay cuts. There are sick people dying because they can't afford health insurance. Gas prices are going up. Tuition is ever increasing. Grants may be downsized.

There is a crisis in America! And what do we do? Absolutely nothing (at least the people overseas are protesting). We just accept another day not being able to find a job, enough money to support our families or losing our homes. But still we stay silent while our government looks outward and considers spending money it can spend at home to help the poverty in our own borders.

It seems that the focus should be put on our own troubles first. How can you expect to help others when you can't help yourself? The only reason we choose to invade other countries and 'rescue' the people is for the resources.

The U.S. is not rich in resources. We depend heavily on a lot of countries for things like oil and diamonds. It just happens to be that places like Libya are part of OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) meaning they have and control a great oil supply. When these places experience crisis we feel that we must get involved or else we may risk losing our supply of resources. But our so called 'helping' a country is not the best option.

Our intentions may seem beneficial but they are harmful. Look at the war on terrorism. We've been in Iraq for over 10 years and what do we have to prove, nothing but the lives of innocent people lost. Do we have evidence that getting involved has helped the Iraqi people? Not really and it definitely hasn't helped us either. This just proves that once you get involved you get sucked in and it's hard to get out.

Another thing wrong with us intending to help other countries is a moral aspect. You have to realize that foreign countries have used dictatorships, monarchies, etc. successfully for many years. Just because there's a snag doesn't mean that it is ineffective way of governing. When we come in and try to make another country accept democracy as the only way to govern it is just wrong. It makes us look bad and immoral for not considering the culture and beliefs of other nations.

Of course, I'm not the only one that feels this way. A recent poll on politicsdaily.com showed that only about 25% of Americans feel we should get involved in the crisis in Egypt. That means that over 70% believe that we should not be involved. Until we can figure out how to effectively run our own country we should stay out of the business of others.

Yes to humanitarian efforts

By Alicia Bayat
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"Arab League Urges No-Fly zone for Lybia," according to the Los Angeles Times.

One at a time old regimes are toppled through the sheer will and determination of the people. But for Lybia it's been a long hard fight.

Does the United States have a "moral" obligation to get involved in the internal affairs of another nation?

That's the question on everyone's minds these past few weeks as riots and violent clashes unfold as they have in Lybia.

While the world has watched in astonishment as a wave of violence and protests sweep through North Africa and the Middle East, Lybian leader Moammar Qadhafi holds on to the reigns of a power with the determination of a man obsessed.

The U.S. government has a long history of humanitarian, and military involvement in the affairs of other nations.

The U.S. is well known for becoming involved on the side of the little guy to "right a wrong," or balance out a tyrannical leadership.

When is getting involved becoming too involved?

The "moral obligation" argument has been tossed around by the Obama administration often. It was used in the health care argument and is now being used in the argument for initiating military action against Lybian leader Qadhafi.

The U.S. is considering establishing a "No fly-zone" over Lybia as peaceful protests have evolved into violent clashes between pro Qadhafi forces and the population. The stand on intervention for the Obama administration has always been that intervention may help prevent the deaths of innocent civilians.

The United States has a moral obligation if not a political obligation as world leaders to get involved in the defense of innocent civilians and to help prevent the deaths of thousands of innocent non-combatants caught in the turmoil.

When two entities have become so embroiled in their own agendas and clashes they forget the innocent that may get hurt in the crossfire someone has to step up and help give a voice to those unable to speak above the fray. If that happens to be the U.S. or any other entity with the resources and ability to

prevent the exploitation or deaths of thousands of innocent people then there is that responsibility to help.

It's harder to step up and help and much easier to turn away and pretend that as long as it's not directly affecting you then not to get involved. You constantly hear the argument that within this country there is rampant unemployment and poverty.

But consider that as Americans we are a fortunate nation. In comparison to the violent clashes innocent citizens are caught up at the moment, Americans can say they have the choice to continue to look for work, find a way to adjust incomes, resources and spending habits. Americans also have the choice to stop complaining and expecting the government to help lift citizens out of poverty and realize all the choices available that others do not enjoy.

Everyday that Americans get up in the morning and complain because they can't afford to finance their "habits" like cable, internet, alcohol, tobacco, video games, and fake out, is another day that someone in Tunisia lost their lives or someone in Egypt couldn't afford to eat. It is even another day that someone stuck in the conflict in Lybia was unable to avoid the possibility of becoming a victim caught between two forces in a struggle for power. It is another day when someone in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iran or Iraq had their voice stifled because of the lack of political, social or religious freedoms many of us, in America enjoy everyday.

As humanitarians with enough resources to sustain leisure time, the U.S. has a moral obligation to intervene and affect the lives of those who don't have the power or resources to help themselves.

You can't fight a powerful force without powerful allies. Intervention doesn't always mean military force.

America can't be everywhere all at once, but it can and does have an important role in the world.

In 2008 Barak Obama promised to mobilize and lead the international community to help end brutality and violence if he became president. President Obama is now faced with that decision in 2011 as Lybian leader Moammar Qadhafi initiates extreme violent measures against his own people to hold on to his 41 year reign.

It's time to stop talking and act.

